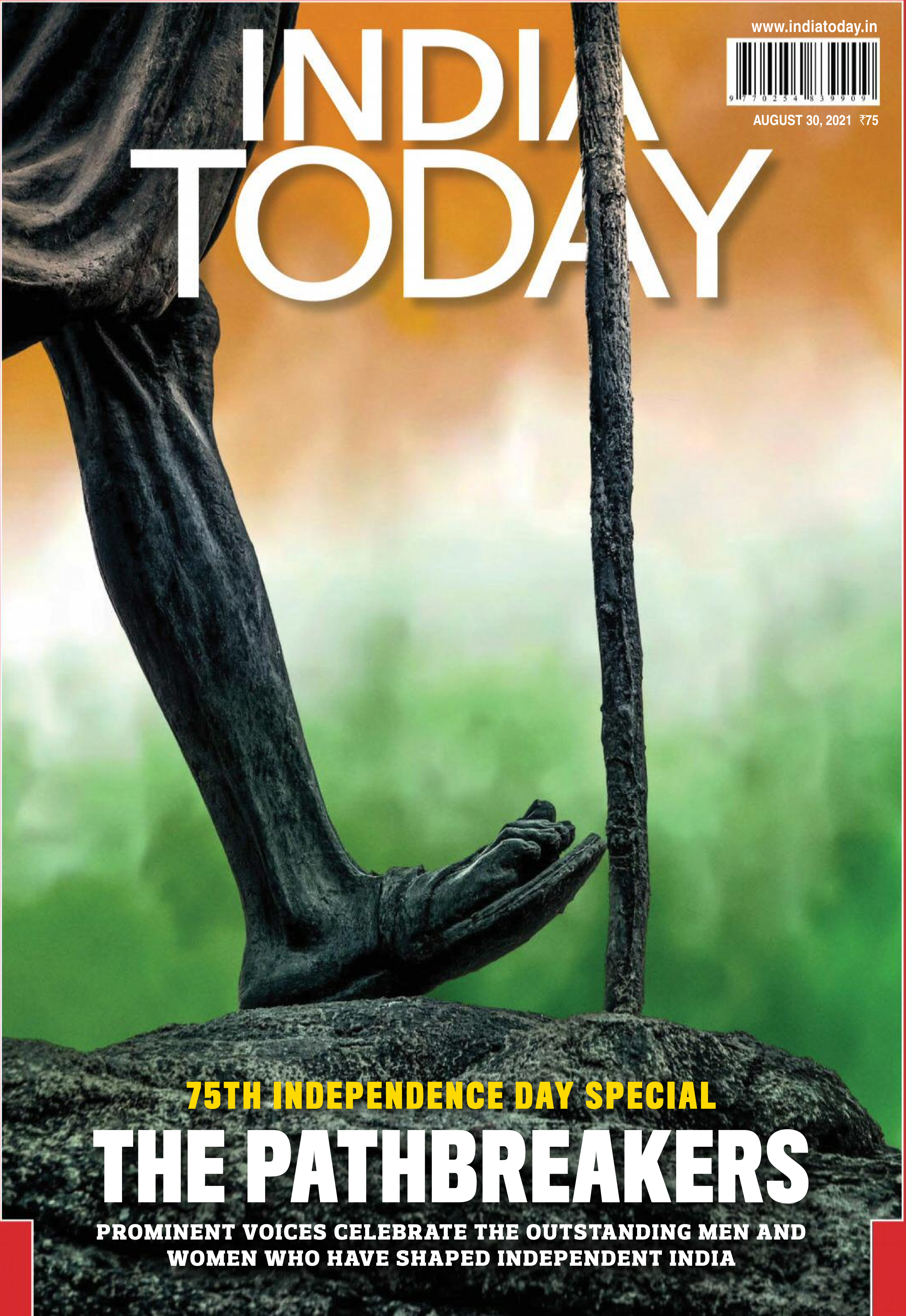

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AUGUST 30, 2021 ₹75

75TH INDEPENDENCE DAY SPECIAL

THE PATHBREAKERS

PROMINENT VOICES CELEBRATE THE OUTSTANDING MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE SHAPED INDEPENDENT INDIA

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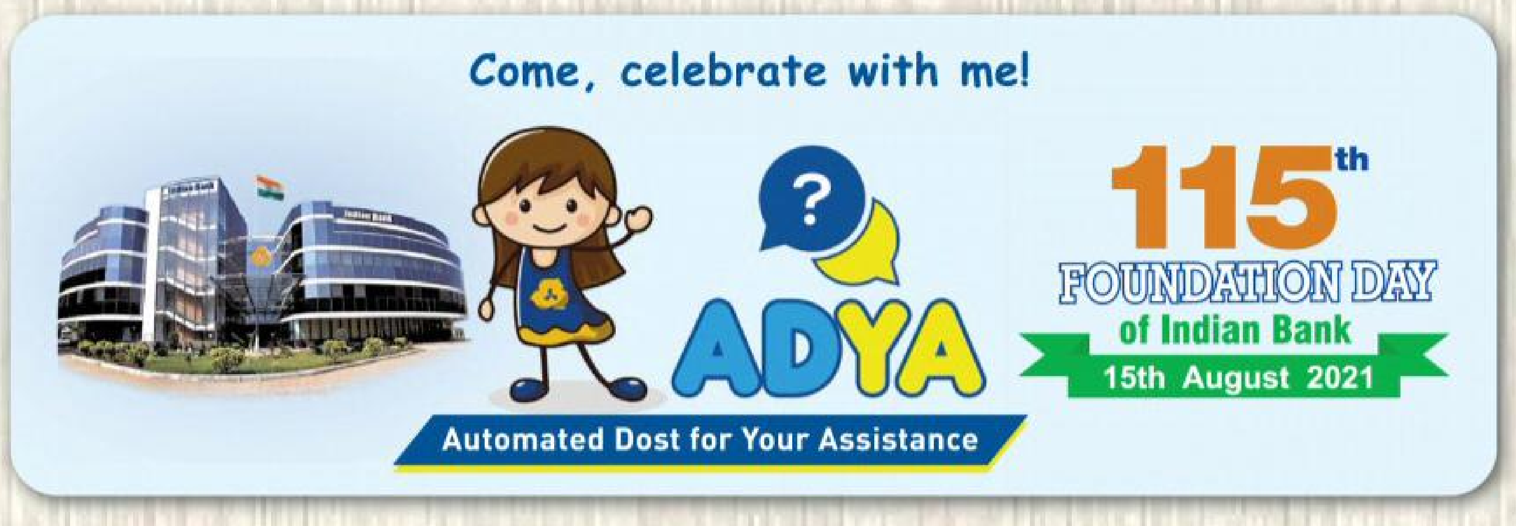
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FROM THE
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

On August 15, 2022, India celebrates 75 eventful years of being the world's largest democracy. There is much to be grateful for. At Independence, we were an impoverished, underdeveloped nation, where just over 18 per cent of the people could read or write, the average citizen could hope to live up to the age of 32, and everything, from food to healthcare centres, doctors, institutions and industries, was in short supply. This, when our population was 350 million compared to 1.3 billion currently. At the end of 74 years, we have made impressive strides in our journey towards gross national wellbeing. Over three-fourths of our people are now educated. Average life expectancy has more than doubled. We are self-sufficient in food production and have belied fears of becoming an economic basket case. We are now the world's fifth-largest economy with a GDP of $2.5 trillion.

The one lesson from our achievements is that nations have the power to rise above their circumstances. Nations, of course, are made up of individuals, from whose ranks rise some exceptional leaders whom we call pathbreakers. By dint of their personalities and achievements, they have played a significant role in bringing us where we are today. From political leaders to business tycoons, scientists to military leaders, sportspersons to writers and artists, India's progress is a sum of their achievements. They have made a difference in our journey as a nation.

INDEPENDENCE DAY SPECIAL
INDIA TODAY
CHAMPIONS OF SELF-RELIANCE

Aug. 24, 2020 cover

Take Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. He used non-violence as a powerful tool in the freedom struggle against the British, inspiring other world leaders and movements. Bhimrao Ambedkar provided the framework not just for Indian democracy but for social reform as well. Sardar Patel welded a patchwork of princely states into the Indian Union. Jawaharlal Nehru, prime minister of the country for the first 17 years, built many of the institutions of our nascent republic. Indira Gandhi went ahead and altered the subcontinent's geography but then imposed the Emergency, whose culmination birthed the first Opposition-led government. Her son Rajiv Gandhi swept to power with the largest mandate given to any prime minister, introduced India to computers and expanded telephony. He was succeeded by Narasimha Rao, one of the unlikeliest Indian PMs, who put us on the path to liberalisation. Then, A.B. Vajpayee conducted the nuclear tests. He was followed by Manmohan Singh, who presided over the fastest-growing Indian economy. Finally, we have Narendra Modi, the only non-Congress prime minister to win two consecutive single-party electoral mandates, who has revolutionised social sector schemes with direct cash transfers and free LPG cylinders, toilets and clean drinking water for the common man. He has also abrogated Article 370, which has fundamentally altered the state of the Indian Union.

India has thus been fortunate to have leaders whose deeds continue to impact us positively, by and large. Nation-building, of course, is not just the preserve of the political class. We have had trailblazing business tycoons and wealth creators like J.R.D. Tata, who launched industries and research institutions, and Dhirubhai Ambani, who created a vibrant stock market culture among Indians. IT czars like N.R. Narayana Murthy have put India on the global information technology map. Going off the beaten path, these titans have changed the course of the nation's destiny. There are other islands of excellence, notably in cutting-edge scientific research and technology. A string of visionaries like Homi Bhabha, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Raja Ramanna, Vikram Sarabhai and Satish Dhawan ensured that a developing country could become a space and atomic power. Scientists like Shanti Swaroop Bhatnagar, who set up a series of research laboratories, and M.S. Swaminathan, father of the Green Revolution, also infused a scientific temper in the country.

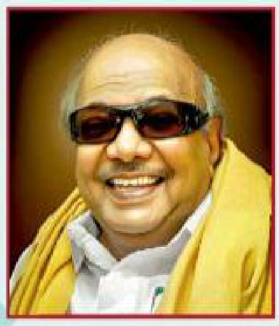
In sports, cricketing legends like Sunil Gavaskar, Sachin Tendulkar, and athletes like P.T. Usha and Milkha Singh, have inspired several new generations of sporting stars. Auteurs like Satyajit Ray and Adoor Gopalakrishnan have put India on the world map. Mother Teresa brought new meaning to compassion in her service for the poorest of the poor.

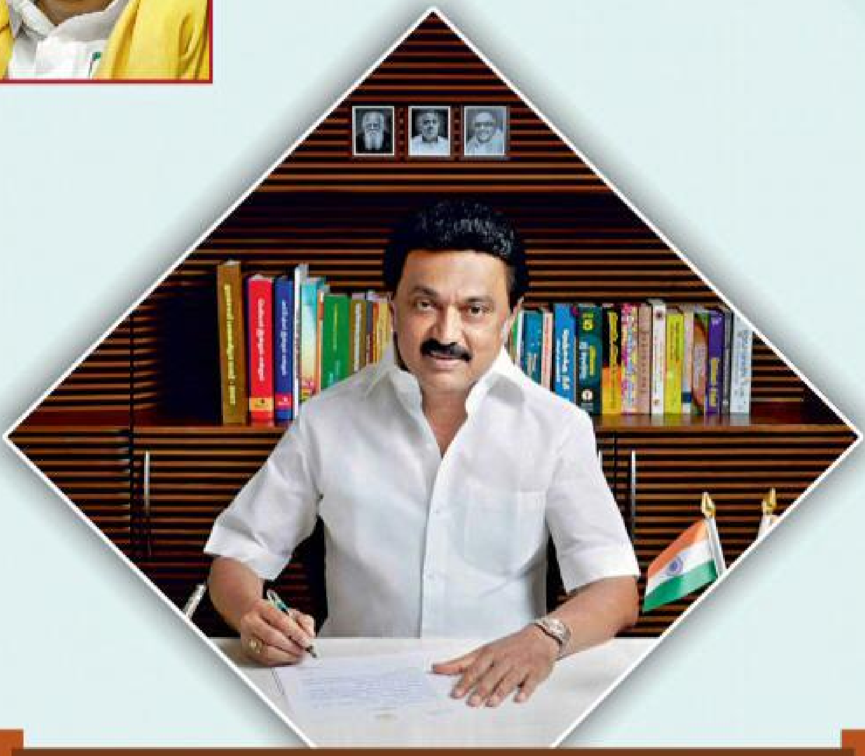
I mention only a few pathbreakers, but we have 115 titans in this Independence Day special. They come from politics, business, science, defence, spirituality, literature, music, dance, arts, sports, cinema and leisure. All of them have enriched the nation in their own way. I am sure there are many more pathbreakers whom we have not covered but who have contributed to nation-building. For their absence, I apologise.

Since our pathbreakers are so well-known, getting a fresh perspective on their lives and work was challenging. So we got another group of extraordinary individuals to write about them. This is what makes our special issue so special. Thus we have President Ram Nath Kovind writing on former prime minister Morarji Desai, His Holiness the Dalai Lama on Mahatma Gandhi, Rajmohan Gandhi on Sardar Patel, Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Prime Minister Modi, Akali chief Parkash Singh Badal on Sheikh Abdullah, Congressman Kamal Nath on P.V. Narasimha Rao, P. Chidambaram on Manmohan Singh, Bihar's Nitish Kumar on fellow chief minister, Naveen Patnaik of Odisha, former Bihar chief minister Lalu Prasad Yadav on his mentor Ram Manohar Lohia, Azim Premji on JRD Tata, BCCI president and former captain Sourav Ganguly on Sachin Tendulkar, Simi Garewal on Raj Kapoor, just to name a few. Their takes on our pathbreakers make for interesting and unusual reading.

India is a country where 50 per cent of the population is under 25 and thus bubbling with youthful energy and ideas. We are a country on the move. The centenary of our Independence is just 26 years away. I hope our diamond jubilee becomes the stepping stone for this next major milestone. For that, there will be a whole new set of pathbreakers. May their breed flourish, and may they keep their tryst with destiny.

(Aroon Purie)





RISING TAMIL NADU

100 DAYS THAT SPELL THE NAME

Days
Achievements

I, Muthuvel Karunanidhi Stalin...

100 Days of
Government of Tamil Nadu...

- Saving people from Corona pandemic
- Rs.4,000 and 14 grocery items to 2.07 crore family rice cardholders
- **Petrol price reduced by Rs.3 per litre. Aavin milk price reduced by Rs.3 per litre**
- **Free bus travel for women, differently-abled and transgenders**
- **A Multi-Speciality Hospital at a cost of Rs.250 crore in the campus of King Institute, Chennai**
- **"Kalaignar Memorial Library"** with modern facilities at a cost of Rs.70 crore in Madurai
- 49 Industrial Projects through **"Investors First Destination - Tamil Nadu"**. Rs.28,508 crore investment, 83,482 employment opportunities

DIPR/729/DISPLAY/2021

- **"Health at the Doorstep Scheme"** - First in the Country
- Appointment of Archagars from all castes
- Poojas in **"Annai Thamizh"** in Temples
- **10.5% Special Reservation for Vanniars, 7% for Seermarabinar and 2.5% for other MBCs**
- **"Separate Annual Budget for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare"** - First in the State
- Fixed Deposit of Rs.5 lakh and Rs.3 lakh to children who lost their parents due to Corona disease
- Journalists announced as frontline workers. Rs.10 lakh compensation to the families of those who die of Covid-19
- Financial allocation of Rs.4,508.23 crore to Free Electricity Scheme
- Re-introduction of **"Anna Marumalarchi"** and **"Namakku Naame"** Schemes
- **"Kalaignarin Anaithu Grama Orunginaintha Velaan Valarchi Thittam"** at a cost of Rs.1,245.45 crore
- Financial allocation of Rs.1,149.79 crore for the **"Welfare of Fishermen"**
- **"Kalaignar Urban Development Scheme"** at a cost of Rs.1,000 crore
- Rs.2,756 crore loan to Women Self Help Groups waived. **Rs.20,000 crore loan assistance**
- **"Thagaisal Thamizhar Award"** constituted for eminent persons who contribute to Tamil Nadu and Tamils
- **"Economic Advisory Council"** with World renowned Economists
- **"Singara Chennai 2.0"** to improve Chennai to the international standards

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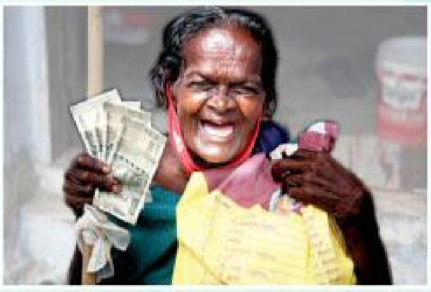

This is not my Government ! This is our Government !
We will work hard to earn goodwill even from our adversaries !
We will work hard ! Work hard ! Work hard !

- M.K. STALIN, Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu

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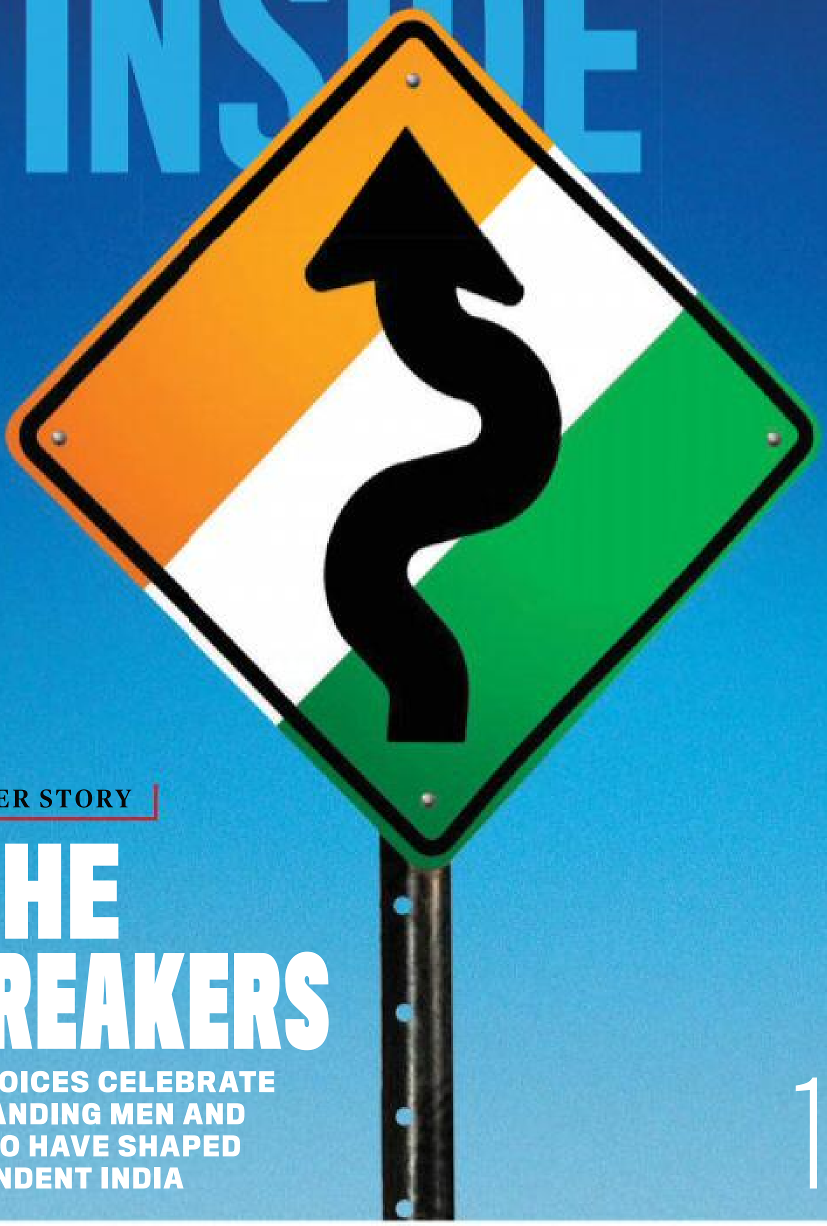

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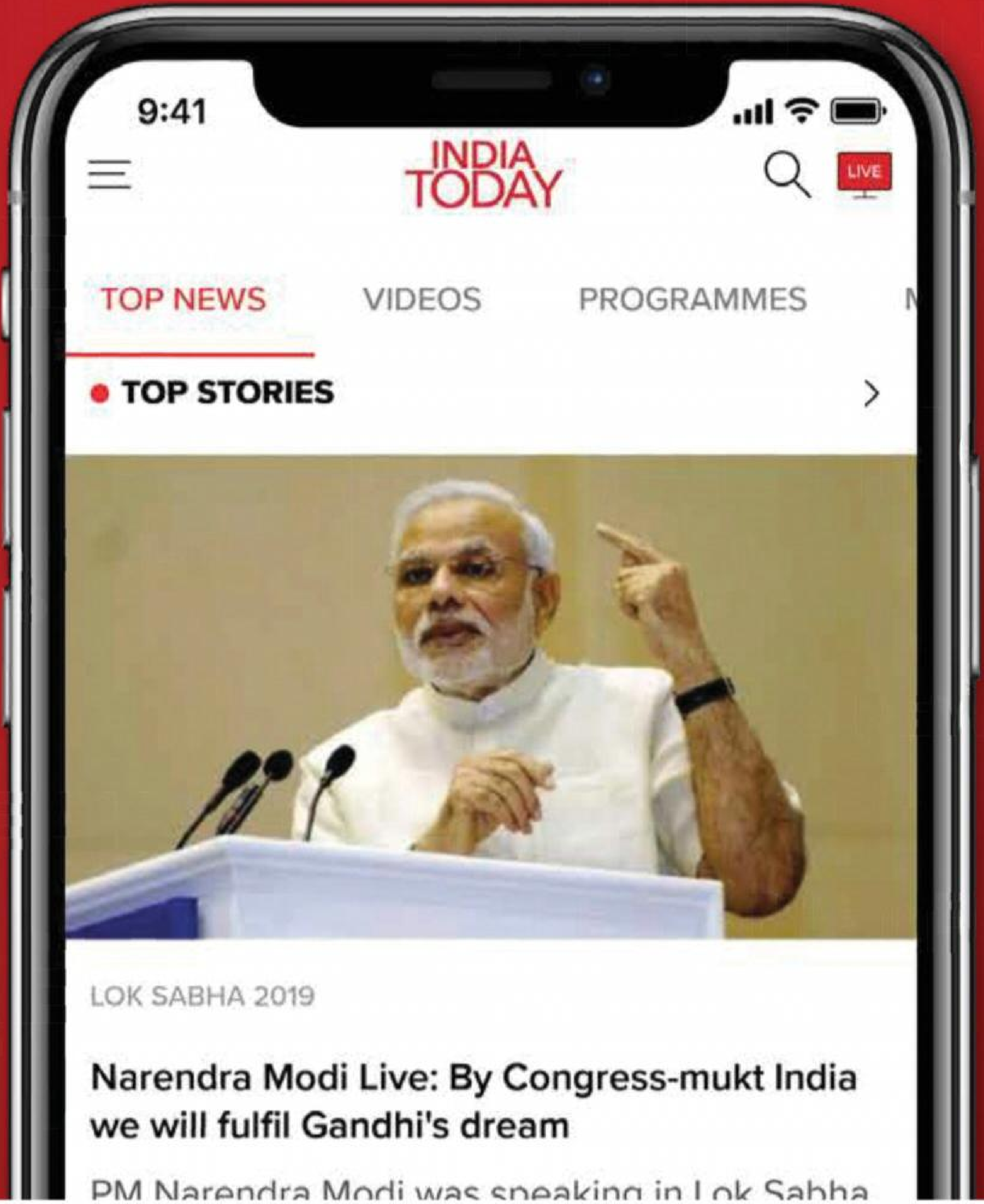

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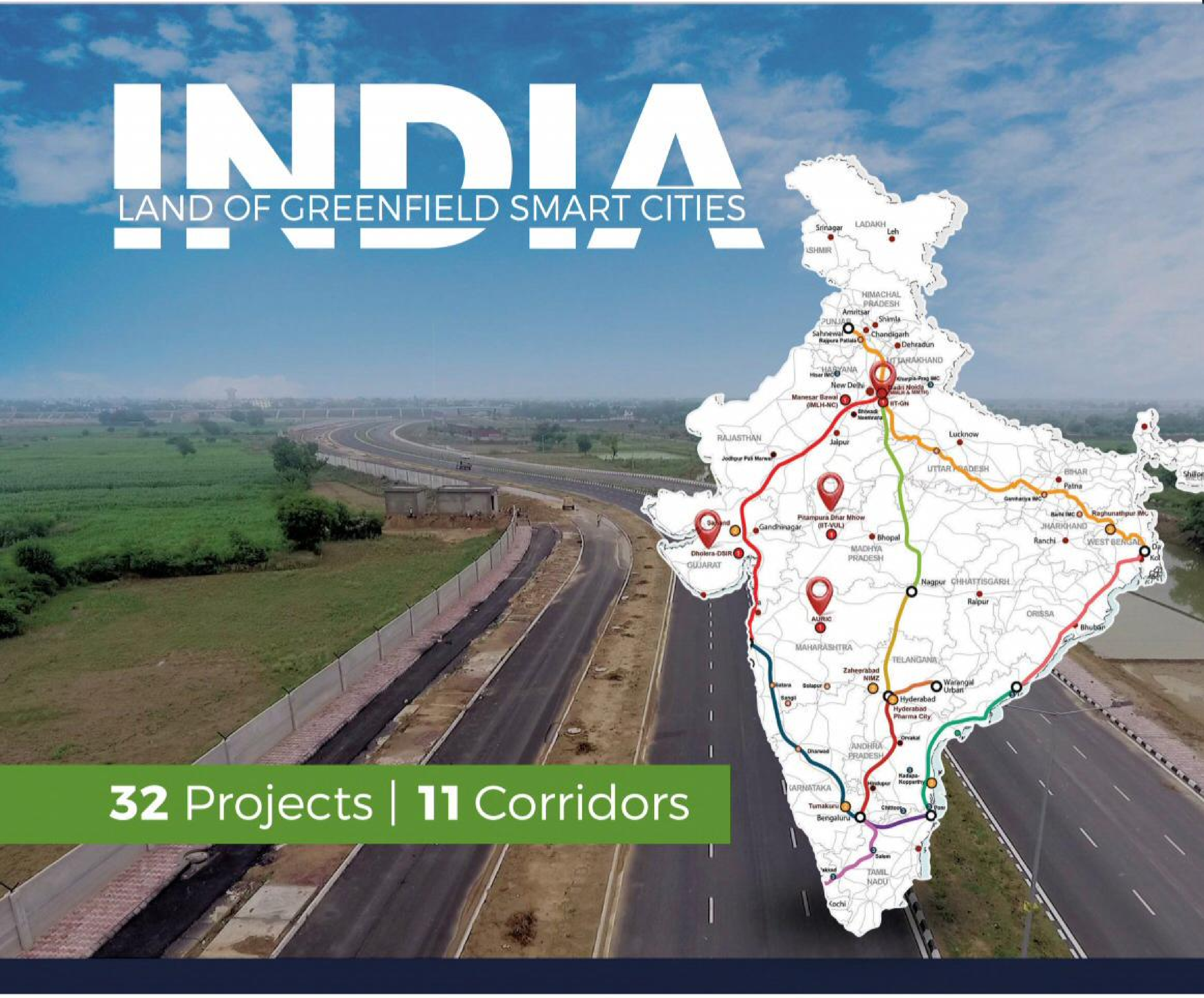

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THE PATHBREAKERS

On our 75th Independence Day, we remember the titans who have helped us in the journey so far. In politics and in sports, in business and in literature, they have shown the way with their extraordinary deeds

BY RAJ CHENGAPPA

While describing two extraordinary pathbreakers who changed the world, US civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr observed, "Man has thought twice in our century, once with Albert Einstein and then with Mahatma Gandhi. Einstein's thought transformed the understanding of the physical world, Gandhi's thought transformed the understanding of the political world." Einstein himself would say of Gandhi, "In our time of utter moral decadence, Gandhi was the only true statesman to stand for a higher human relationship in our political sphere. Generations to come will scarcely believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked the earth."

What made Gandhi one of the most influential personalities of the era? Harvard psychologist Howard Gardner, in his book *Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership*, puts Gandhi in the rare category of a visionary leader who, in his definition, is "not content to relate a current story or to reactivate a story drawn from a recent past. This individual actually creates a new story, one not known to most individuals before, and achieves at least a measure of success to conveying this story effectively to others". Who else does Gardner put in this category? Jesus, Buddha and Prophet Muhammad!

So while the western scientific world spearheaded by Einstein was busy building, via the Manhattan Project, the most destructive weapon humankind had ever invented—the atom bomb—to thwart the forces led by Adolf Hitler in World War II, Gandhi was evolving a whole new weapon to overthrow the greatest colonial power in the world: Ahimsa, the principle of non-violence. Gandhi believed the might of the British empire would not be able to suppress the infinitely superior moral and spiritual force that a peaceful resistance would generate. As he said, "The forces of the spirit are ever progressive and endless. Its full expression makes it unconquerable to the world." Gandhi was proved right when India gained Independence on August 15, 1947, largely through the peaceful *satyagraha* and non-cooperation that he spearheaded. In doing so, he inspired a whole generation of leaders, from Martin Luther King Jr, Nelson Mandela to the Dalai Lama.

To mark India's 75th Independence Day, INDIA TODAY decided to feature, along with Gandhi, 114 pathbreakers from many walks of life who created their own enthralling narratives and made a difference to the nation's growth and development. Whether in politics, business, science, defence, art, entertainment or leisure, these extraordinary leaders have much in common: they have amazing clarity and energy, are not afraid to pursue a bold vision, are willing to overcome any obstacle to achieve it, are rebels in their own right, are not rule-bound, think differently and are virtually unstoppable in their mission to change the status quo.

What our pathbreakers share are clarity and energy, and the fearlessness and will to follow a bold vision

Instead of a clinical listing of their achievements, we decided to request prominent individuals acquainted with their work to give us their insights on these outstanding men and women, especially what made them tick. Many write that the path to fulfilment for these leaders was not easy. Mother Teresa's biographer Navin Chawla points out that the greatest fear she initially had to overcome was of the humiliation of begging for food and medicines for the needy. Yet by the time she died in 1997, she had established a multinational order of compassion for the destitute across 123 countries. She once observed, "We can do no great things, only small things with great love." In the following pages, we bring you extraordinary narratives that will surely inspire new generations to emulate these pathbreakers. ■

Illustration by NILANJAN DAS

MAHATMA TO THE WORLD

M.K. GANDHI (1869-1948)

From crafting a unique idiom for India's freedom struggle to striving for communal amity at any cost—including his life—the father of the Indian nation has left behind an enduring legacy for the world

BY THE DALAI LAMA

For me, Mahatma Gandhi symbolises 'Ahimsa', or non-violence, as well as 'Karuna', or compassion. One of my main commitments today is to promote these two principles, and I believe that India is the only country with the potential to combine its ancient knowledge with modern education. Gandhiji exemplified both Ahimsa and Karuna, and I think of him as my teacher.

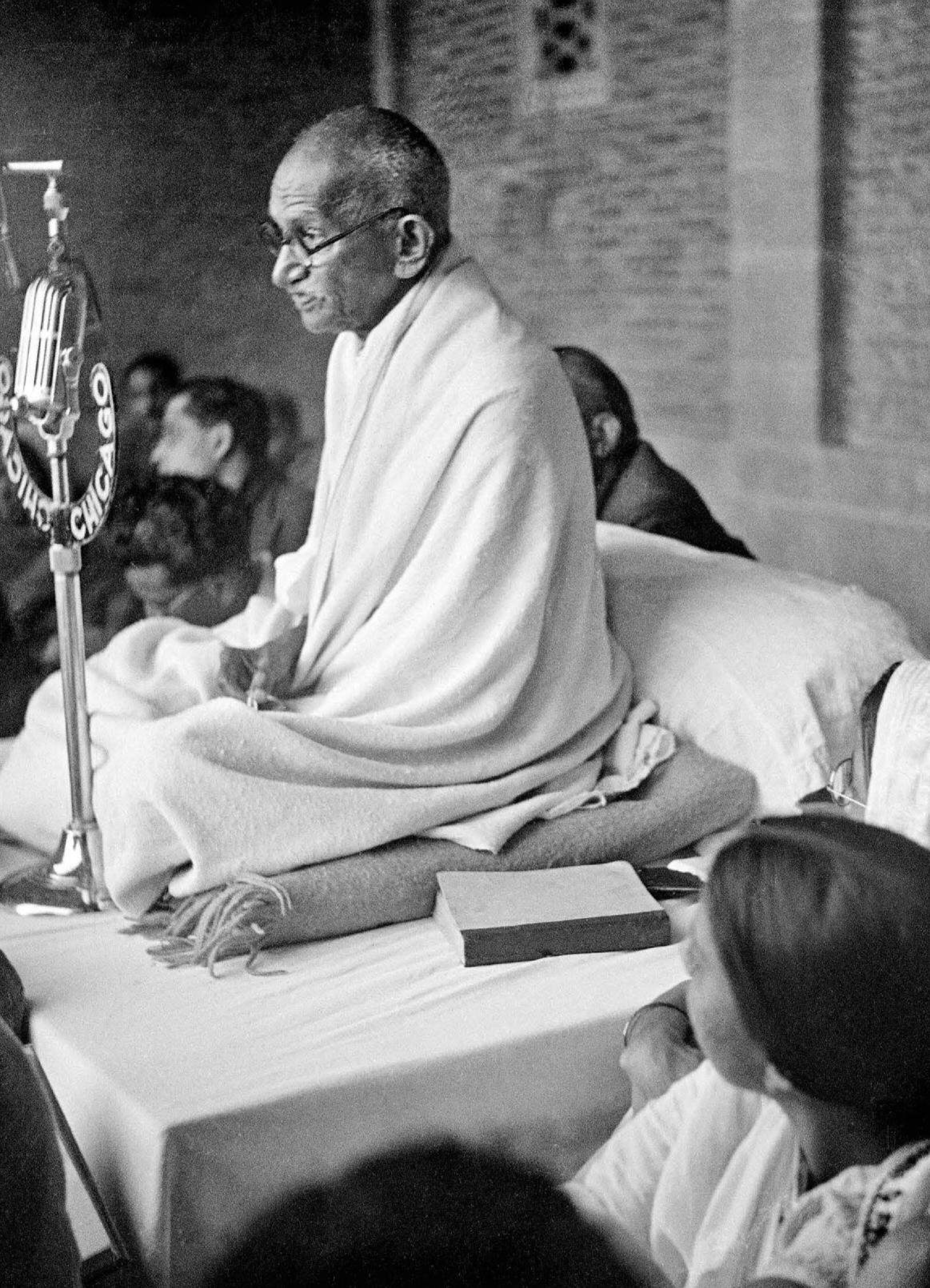
On my first visit to India in 1956, I made a pilgrimage to Rajghat, on the banks of the Yamuna river, where Mahatma Gandhi was cremated. As I stood there in prayer, I experienced great sadness at not being able to meet him in person, but also great joy at the magnificent example of his life. To me, he remains the model politician, a man who put his belief in altruism above all personal considerations and consistently maintained respect for all great spiritual traditions.

Gandhi was perhaps the greatest of our time, the man who continued till his dying day to preserve the spirit of India and of all mankind: a true believer in peace and harmony. He inspired followers in Africa and America like Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King Jr. Today, in a world where bullying and killing still take place, we need compassion and non-violence more than ever. I am firmly committed to combining these ideals with the best of modern education. ■

***The Dalai Lama** is the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhists and a Nobel laureate. Since 1959, he has been living in Dharamsala, India*

> **Gandhi remains the model politician, a man who put his belief in altruism above personal considerations and consistently maintained respect for all spiritual traditions**

ALAMY


CHICAGO

ALAMY

> He was called an immense banyan tree under whose shade no one could grow, but as an institution-builder sans peer, he ensured a variety of flora flourished in the forest

NATION BUILDER

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU (1889-1964)

As the country's first prime minister, Nehru shaped India's 'tryst with destiny', steeped in the socialist and secularist ideals of his time

BY SHASHI THAROOR

When Jawaharlal Nehru, independent India's first prime minister, died in 1964, his legacy to the nation and the world seemed secure. A towering figure in national politics and on the international stage, the reflective, mercurial Nehru—in innumerable books and speeches, and in his conduct as prime minister—developed and articulated a worldview that embodied the aspirations of his generation, of his country and (many believed) of the developing post-colonial world.

For the first 17 years of India's independence, Nehru—a moody, idealist intellectual who felt an almost mystical empathy with the peasant masses; an aristocrat, accustomed to privilege, who had passionate socialist convictions; an Anglicised product of Harrow and Cambridge who spent 18 years in British jails; an agnostic radical who became an unlikely protégé of the saintly Mahatma Gandhi—*was* India. Upon the Mahatma's assassination, Nehru became the keeper of the national flame, the most visible embodiment of India's struggle for freedom.

Incorruptible, visionary, ecumenical, a democrat to his fingertips, a politician above politics, Nehru's stature was so great that all he needed to do if anyone opposed him was to threaten to resign: he usually got his way. He was called an immense banyan tree in whose shade no other plant could grow, but as an institution-builder without peer, he ensured a variety of flora flourished in the forest.

The Nehru legacy rested on four major pillars—democratic institution-building, staunch pan-Indian secularism, socialist economics at home and a foreign policy of non-alignment. All four have been challenged, and strained to the breaking point, by the developments of recent years.■

Shashi Tharoor *is a celebrated author, Lok Sabha MP and former Under-Secretary General of the United Nations*

The States Man

SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL (1875-1950)

His iron will the perfect foil for Nehru's softer core, there was no one better than India's Iron Man to forge an Indian Union out of fragmented princely states

BY RAJMOHAN GANDHI

From an easy chair six feet away, Sardar Patel seemed to be mocking me. I was 14. When I looked closely, there was affection in his eyes. Four decades later, I would write his biography.

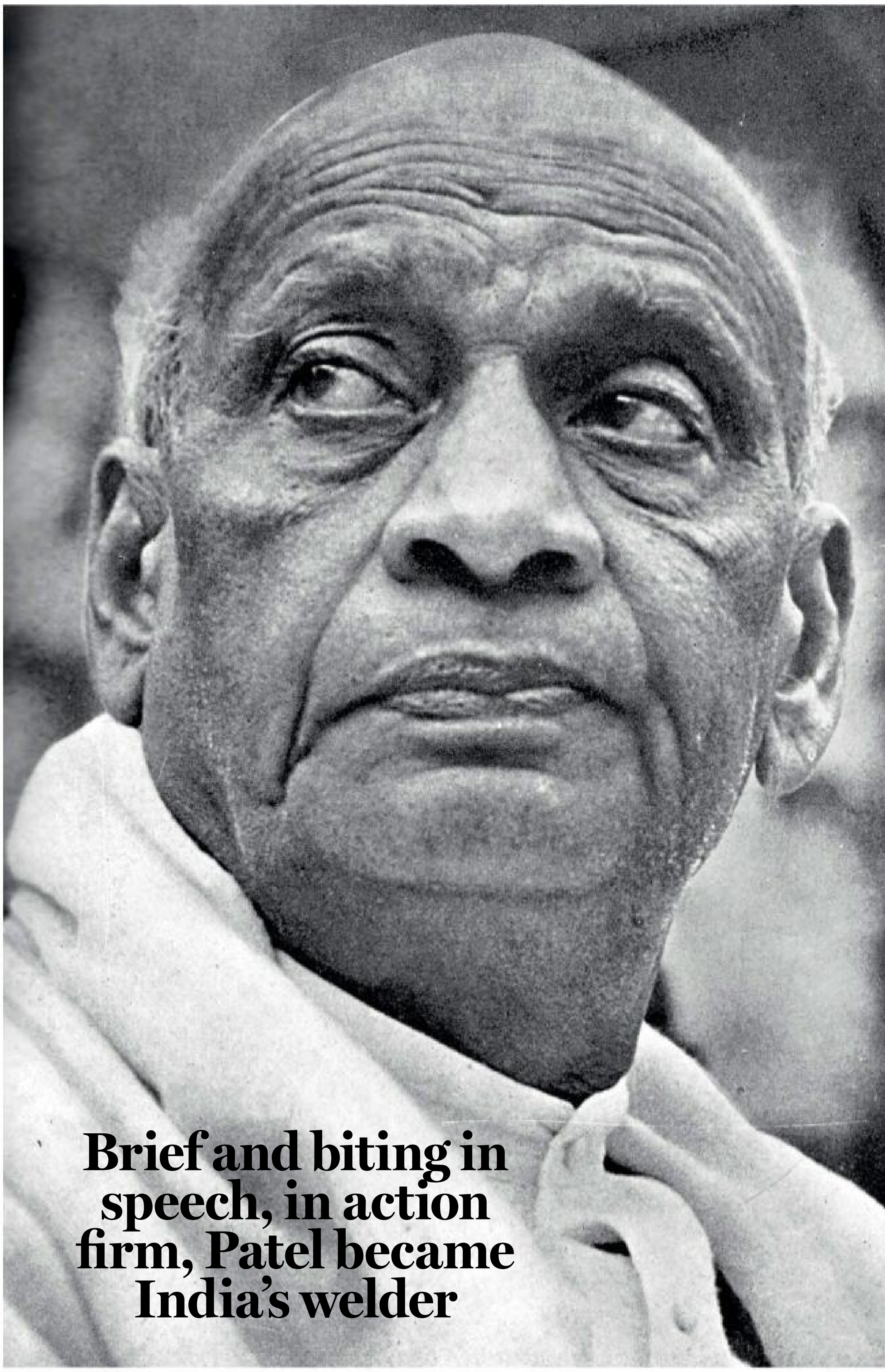
Born to impoverished peasant proprietors in central Gujarat, this neglected middle son relied on himself. Working as a *vakil* in Godhra and Borsad, he lost his wife Jhaverba early but used his savings to study law in London. Returning as a barrister, he dazzled Ahmedabad with earnings and bridge-table skills, but in 1918 chose to throw himself at Gandhi's side for India's freedom.

In 1928, after he had led a successful *satyagraha* against a hike in land tax, Bardoli's peasants bequeathed on him the title of 'Sardar'. In 1931, he was the INC president while Nehru, 14 years younger, was general secretary; it had been the reverse a year earlier. Patel and Nehru got paired in the Indian mind, first as Gandhi's chief lieutenants, later as India's duumvirs.

Between 1937 and 1939, Patel was in practice the Congress's national boss. From 1942 to 1945, Patel, Nehru, then-Congress-president Azad, and a few others were prisoners together in Maharashtra's Ahmednagar Fort.

From August 1947 to December 1950, Patel as deputy PM and Nehru as premier jointly ran free India's first government. Getting hundreds of princely states to accede, Patel became India's welder. Brief and biting in speech, in action firm, the Sardar kept his promises, including one he made to himself beside the Mahatma's body: to remain a candid but faithful comrade to Nehru. ■

Rajmohan Gandhi *is the author of* Patel: A Life *(1990). He is a grandson of the Mahatma*



Brief and biting in speech, in action firm, Patel became India's welder

ALAMY

SCRIPTING DEMOCRACY

BHIMRAO RAMJI AMBEDKAR

(1891-1956)

With doctorates in economics from both Columbia and LSE, Ambedkar set about providing a framework not just for Indian democracy but also for social reform. He remains a beacon for the Dalit movement

BY KANCHA ILAIAH SHEPHERD

INDIAN EXPRESS ARCHIVE

As India celebrates the diamond jubilee of its independence next year, how do we judge Bhimrao Ambedkar, who, as the chairman of the drafting committee, inscribed a Constitution that has helped 'We the people of India' survive as a democracy? This would not have been possible but for the Constitution's path-breaking ideological framework that addressed the country's graded, unequal caste/ class structures with a view to reframe socio-spiritual and graded economic inequalities and opportunities. Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel would not have foreseen the impending dangers that could break the democratic Constitution with the existing caste-untouchable and multi-religious social fabric of our society as it existed till 1947.

It was Ambedkar who could foresee the kind of modern Constitution that could break the social, spiritual and political anti-democratic structures that were put in place from the days of Kautilya who strategised a Varnadharmic monarchical state and civil society in the 3rd century BCE and *Manusmriti* that legitimised the hierarchically fragmented Indian society thereafter. The present Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the Bharatiya Janata Party would have easily brought back a Golwalkarite (a modern representative of Manu) modern Varnadharma state after they captured Delhi—through election in 1999 and 2014—but for the philosophical awakening that Ambedkar left behind among the Dalits/ Shudras/ OBCs.

The Dwija political forces of all hues would have easily reconciled with the Savarkar-Golwalkar ideology as it would not have disturbed their socio-spiritual and political hegemony. Even the left-liberal ideologues who proclaim secularism and socialism as their goals would not have stopped the possible deconstruction of democracy by Golwalkarites.

The powerful written framework that he laid down has paved the way for socio-religious reform

Ambedkar saved India from becoming a post-colonial political system like that of Pakistan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. Given our caste-ridden, multi-religious social fabric as well as huge class differences courtesy the Indian mode of caste feudalism and capitalism, where a small number of people control everything, democracy would have perhaps been blown apart by now. By drafting a skillful Constitution, Ambedkar paved the way for socio-religious reform, with a powerful written theoretical framework. He is not just a path-breaker but also a saviour of Indian democracy. ■

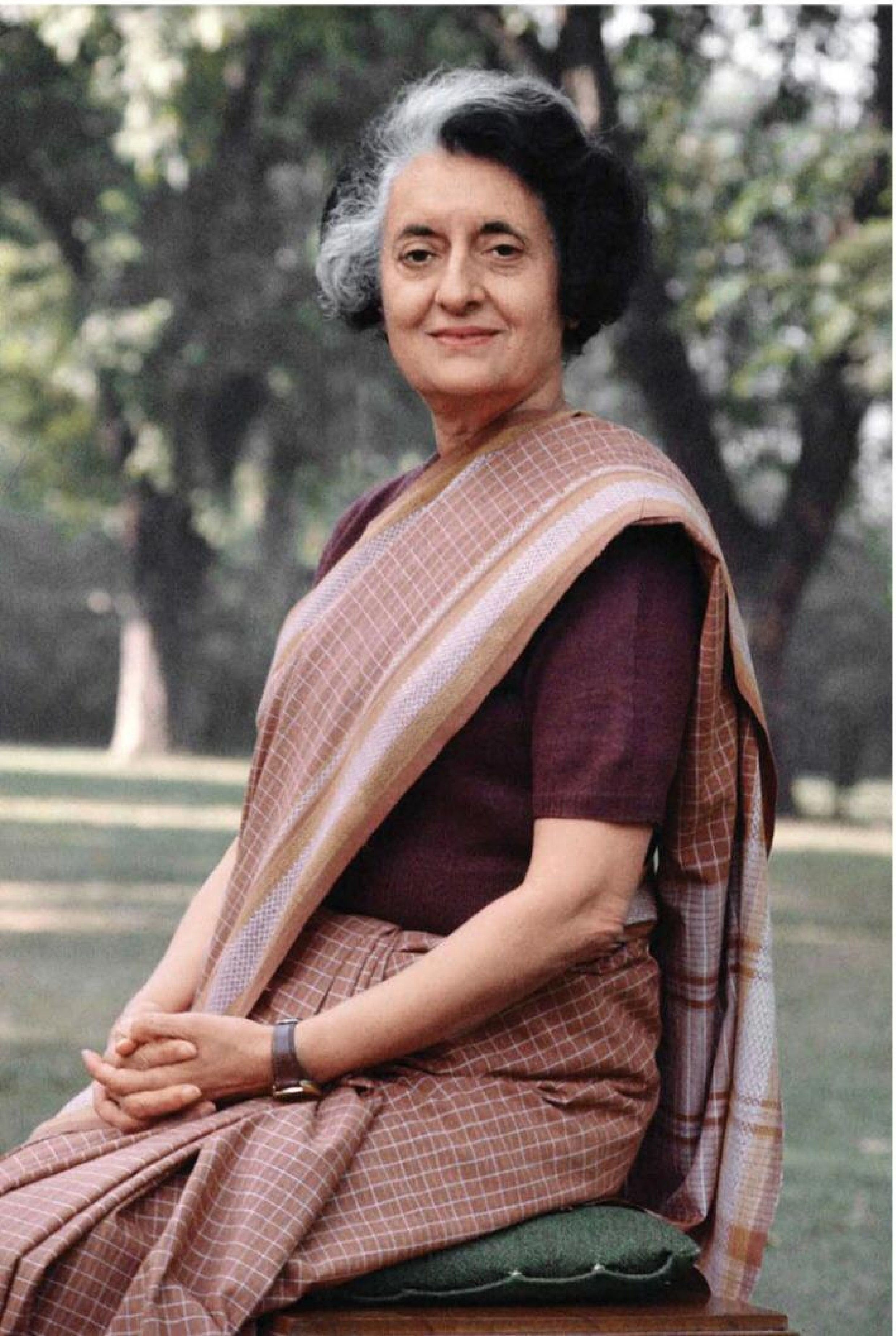
Kancha Ilaiah Shepherd *is a political theorist, social activist and author of* Why I am Not a Hindu *and* Post-Hindu India

LADY COLOSSUS

INDIRA GANDHI (1917-1984)

From being dubbed 'goongi gudiya' to being hailed as the 'Iron Lady of India', the country's first and only woman prime minister displayed a rare decisiveness both on the national and international stage, even changing the geography of the subcontinent

BY K. NATWAR SINGH



INDIA TODAY ARCHIVES

When Indira Gandhi was first elected prime minister in 1966, Opposition leaders dubbed her a "*gungi gudiya*" (dumb doll). Within years, she would evolve to become one of India's most powerful leaders and a world figure. Her place in history is assured for a number of reasons. Topping them is the fact that she changed the geography of the Indian subcontinent in 1971 by winning the war to liberate Bangladesh. She ensured that at no time during the Bangladesh crisis did the headlights of our diplomacy turn red. She did so by radiating self-assurance and avoiding deterministic rigidity. In an adroit move, she signed the Indo-Soviet peace treaty in August that year. The Chinese got the message and did not support Pakistan during the Bangladesh conflict.

At no point during the '71 war did the headlights of our diplomacy turn red. She did so by radiating self-assurance

On the negative side, declaring Emergency was a 'cardinal sin'. Blue Star led to her assassination. But for these two lapses, she would be called a very great prime minister. Indira Gandhi had a great sense of humour too. Just before her assassination in October that year, I met her and mentioned that I was leaving for Bharatpur to prepare for the Lok Sabha election and would have to acquire a new wardrobe of khadi kurta-pyjama and Nehru jackets. Her reaction was: "Now that you are joining politics, a thicker skin would be more useful!" ■

***K. Natwar Singh** is a former minister of external affairs and a prolific author*

LEADER OF PRINCIPLES

MORARJI DESAI (1896-1995)

A Gandhian to the core, he was punctilious in his public life. He emerged as a symbol of opposition against autocratic impulses when he became prime minister of the country following the dark days of the Emergency

BY RAM NATH KOVIND

INDIA TODAY ARCHIVES

Great people are seldom conscious of their greatness. Their brilliance is often discovered in their mundane, routine work. In my interaction with Morarji Desai as his personal secretary during 1972–74, and thereafter as his admirer, I found him to be our last authentic link with the Gandhian legacy of a principled public life.

How I met him is a long story not relevant here. Yet I can say with certainty that he was a real trailblazer in Indian politics. He fought against the autocracy at the ripe age of nearly eighty with the same zeal that he had displayed in his youth when he had stood up against the British Raj. Following Gandhiji, his politics was inspired by spiritual ideals. Thus, his long and fruitful career was never impaired by personal prejudices. A profound scholar of the Gita on which he could wax eloquent for hours on end, he lived as a Karmayogi, like a true disciple of Gandhiji.

Morarjibhai would stick to his schedule, get up at 4 in the morning and would be ready to meet people at around 8 am every day without fail. While talking to people, he would continue to spin the *charkha* to make yarn for his own clothes. He fully believed in the Gandhian logic behind khadi: poor spinners and weavers benefit from khadi, while capitalists gain from clothes from mills. This may sound strange as he was perceived to be a pro-capitalist.

His colossal presence in national politics in the ’70s saved India from slipping into authoritarianism

He was a much misunderstood man in his time. His punctiliousness and integrity in public life are often interpreted as his idiosyncrasies. But his attention to small detail would never attenuate his fierceness in fighting against injustice. Morarjibhai's colossal presence in national politics in the seventies saved the country from slipping into authoritarianism and restored it to the democratic path. He was a political saint who remains inadequately understood in contemporary times. ■

Ram Nath Kovind *is the President of India*

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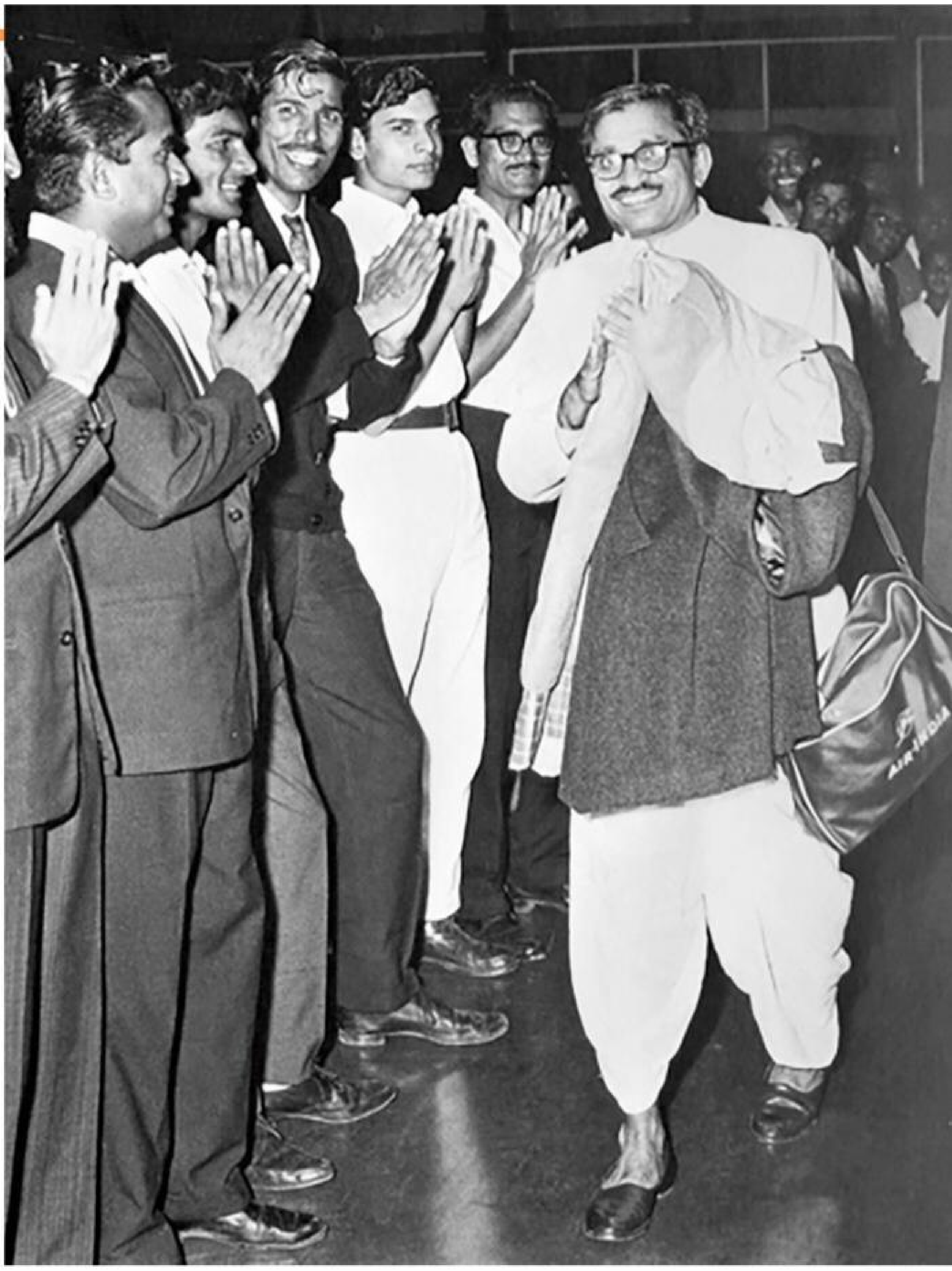
THE IDEOLOGUE

DEENDAYAL UPADHYAYA (1916-1968)

A lifelong RSS *pracharak*, editor of its mouthpiece *Panchjanya* and leader of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh for 15 years, Deendayal Upadhyaya's ideals continue to inspire BJP ideology

BY KRISHNA GOPAL



Deendayal Upadhyaya became a Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh *pracharak* as soon as he finished his education. But, on the request of Syama Prasad Mookerjee, he was asked to move to the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) where he became general secretary in 1952 and president in 1967. Tragically, he was killed shortly after. His life was simple, character spotless and conscience sensitive. Upadhyaya believed that the purpose of politics is to strengthen the fundamental philosophy and principles of the nation. When political stalwarts were contemplating whether the country should imitate the West or move towards communism, he said neither of them were suitable. He advocated that India should grow in keeping with its resources, population, cultural heritage and needs.

Upadhyaya was clear that India's non-alignment policy was ineffective. That India should not have remained silent when China annexed Tibet in 1950-51. But he was careful not to criticise Nehru's policies when he was abroad as these were India's internal matters. At the time of the Chinese invasion in 1962, he called upon the party workers to stand united with the government amid the national crisis.

While others debated whether to follow the West or the Left, he advocated that India follow its own path

He argued that Article 370 of the Constitution was unconstitutional, saying all provinces and all citizens are equal. That there must not be appeasement of anyone. He spoke of the need to avoid voting on the basis of caste and believed India's spiritual nature to be the lone basis of its cultural unity. That despite its infinite diversity, this nation is a united entity. He gave the BJS a sound ideological foundation that the Bharatiya Janata Party has inherited. ■

***Krishna Gopal** is Sah Sarkaryavah, RSS*

THE FEDERALIST

C.N. ANNADURAI (1909-1969)

An acclaimed writer and playwright, he founded a vibrant regional party in the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam on September 17, 1949, and used Tamil cinema for effective propaganda

BY M.K. STALIN

INDIAN EXPRESS

Perarignar Anna was, and is, looked up to by millions as an elder brother who led Tamils to a new political dawn. That his name—Anna—reflects the deep fraternal bonding adds to the charm of this political colossus who bestrode the Dravidian landscape like no other.

On the day India became independent in 1947, Thanthai Periyar, the leader of the Dravidar Kazhagam, had announced that he would not celebrate independence for it did not signify the liberation of society from the ills of caste. In contrast, Anna reasoned that India's Independence Day signified political freedom and that we must continue to fight for social liberation and invoke the federal spirit.

Despite the vocal demand for a separate Dravida Nadu, Anna was a committed patriot at heart. In fact, during the lead-up to the 1962 Indo-China war, when Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru sought to bring together various political forces, Anna agreed to drop political agitations against the Union government. This, Anna said, was the time to strengthen the Union.

As a member of the House of States, Anna fought for linguistic equality and against centralisation of powers. When he was elected chief minister in 1967, Anna christened Madras State as Tamil Nadu, legalised 'Self-Respect Marriages', void of priests, and ensured supply of subsidised rice across the state.

A key ideological plank of the DMK is that of federalism. It is our sincere belief that a stronger Indian Union can only be built on the back of stronger states. To build stronger states, true and effective federalism is essential in every limb of our governance. Anna visualised that the future of India is inextricably linked to the rise of its states. Anna's socio-economic policies continue to guide Tamil Nadu and serve as a model for effective federal cooperation. His stirring line—'Go to the people, live with them and serve them'—is the takeaway I brought back after paying homage, on my first visit after becoming chief minister, from the Anna residence in Kanchipuram on June 30. ■

Anna visualised that the future of India is linked to the rise of the states

Muthuvel Karunanidhi Stalin *is the chief minister of Tamil Nadu*

Total Revolutionary

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN (1902-1979)

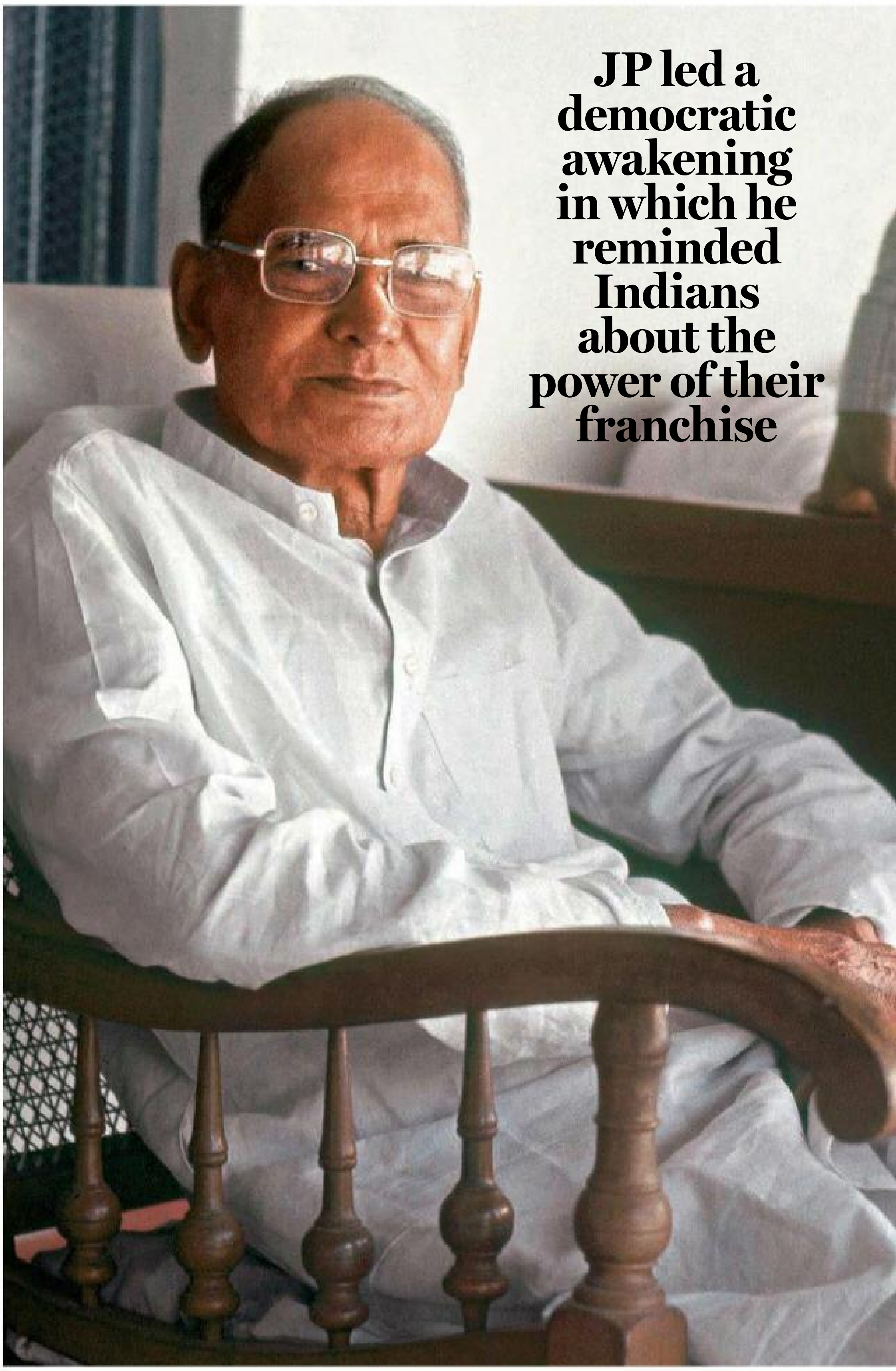
The socialist icon who ensured that no leader, howsoever powerful, would ever dare to repeat a disastrous experiment like the Emergency

BY RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD

Jayaprakash Narayan, popularly known as JP, whom we, the products of the JP movement, respectfully called Lok Nayak, did politics for the powerless, not for power. He epitomised detachment from power. A shining political career awaited him in free India. He was a confirmed socialist and wanted to ensure that India developed on that model. That brought him closer to Jawaharlal Nehru after Independence. Nehru, it was widely perceived, wanted JP to play a crucial role in his government, possibly also as the deputy prime minister after the sad demise of Sardar Patel. But JP chose to go to the villages and work among the poor. In the 1969 presidential election, when Indira Gandhi backed V.V. Giri against the official Congress candidate Neelam Sanjiva Reddy, JP's name appeared as the consensus candidate. But he politely refused.

And then came the famous JP movement in which he led students against corruption and misgovernance. JP laid the foundation of a democratic awakening, ensuring that the people of India knew their rights. His stellar contribution to Indian democracy is to have ensured that after the disastrous experiment of Emergency, no leader will ever repeat the misadventure. JP made the people of India realise that they could defeat any leader, howsoever popular, through the power of their franchise. In 1977, when Indira Gandhi was defeated by the Janata Party, JP, the trusted leader of the masses, could have easily become the prime minister. But he said no as he remained committed to his principles. Commitment meant the world to him. While doing his master's in sociology in the US, his wife Prabhavati Devi took a vow of celibacy in front of Mahatma Gandhi. JP always honoured that commitment and the couple remained childless. ■

A former Union minister, **Ravi Shankar Prasad** *worked closely with JP in his younger days*



JP led a democratic awakening in which he reminded Indians about the power of their franchise

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EXPRESS ARCHIVE PHOTO

> **For Lohiaji, the liberty to criticise the government was essential to any society's progress**

SOCIALIST BULWARK

RAM MANOHAR LOHIA (1910-1967)

The Socialist Party that he founded in 1956 became the template for generations of Indian socialists

BY LALU PRASAD YADAV

Ram Manohar Lohia belonged to a long line of politicians in India who were thinkers, mobilisers, organisers combined with the role of a leader of the masses—qualities that are becoming rarer in politicians these days. His ideas on ensuring social justice for the oppressed communities remain as relevant as ever, but more importantly we need to learn from his spirit to never surrender but continue one's struggle even if the chances of winning are minimal. His idea of resisting injustice through a combination of different modes of protest, embodied in the slogan 'spade, prison and vote', is the need of the hour. It can guide us in combating the onslaught of the Sangh ideology on every pillar of democracy. Lohiaji was one of the very few thinkers who fought vigorously for civil liberties because he felt that the liberty to criticise the government is essential to the progress of any society. His claim that "India lives under the shadow of tyranny and what is worse, fear of tyranny" is apt to characterise the current situation.

Lohiaji's practice of socialism was organic and rooted in Indian reality. He considered caste-based reservation as the real instrument to build an egalitarian society. Lohiaji also reminded us that caste cannot be destroyed without simultaneously waging war against gender discrimination. It is ironic that the BJP is trying to appropriate the legacy of Lohiaji who fought all his life against attacks on the very idea of the Constitution. Through Lohiaji, we have to understand that aggressive majoritarianism is being used to uproot the fight for social justice in India today. The ideas and actions of Lohiaji are even more relevant today than ever before. ■

Lalu Prasad Yadav is president of the Rashtriya Janata Dal and former Bihar chief minister

Eternal Lodestar

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD
(1888-1958)

As India's first education minister, he laid the pedagogic foundation of the country

BY SALMAN KHURSHID

Maulana Azad was a crucial public symbol of newly independent India's commitment to an inclusive, secular society. He thus personified Muslim India's repudiation of Jinnah's two-nation theory. But he played that historic role with the explicit and honest support of all his Congress colleagues headed by Jawaharlal Nehru, particularly when it came to the continuing doubts and sense of insecurity expressed by lay Muslims. One recalls his stirring words on the footsteps of Jama Masjid as an echo of Nehru's 'Tryst with Destiny' speech. That Nehru and Congress chose to invest in him the confidence of a young nation and entrust him with shaping the minds of future generations by making him the minister for education underscores the vision with which new India was born. Many of those dreams have been substantially fulfilled, though much remains to be done. Recent political trends in the country may have sought to erase the direction of the Nehru-Azad progression and substitute it with a majoritarian articulation, confusing the minorities. Maulana Azad, therefore, is a lodestar for our times and the citizen. His life is a critical lesson as we search for safe havens in stormy seas. ■

Salman Khurshid *is a former minister of external affairs*

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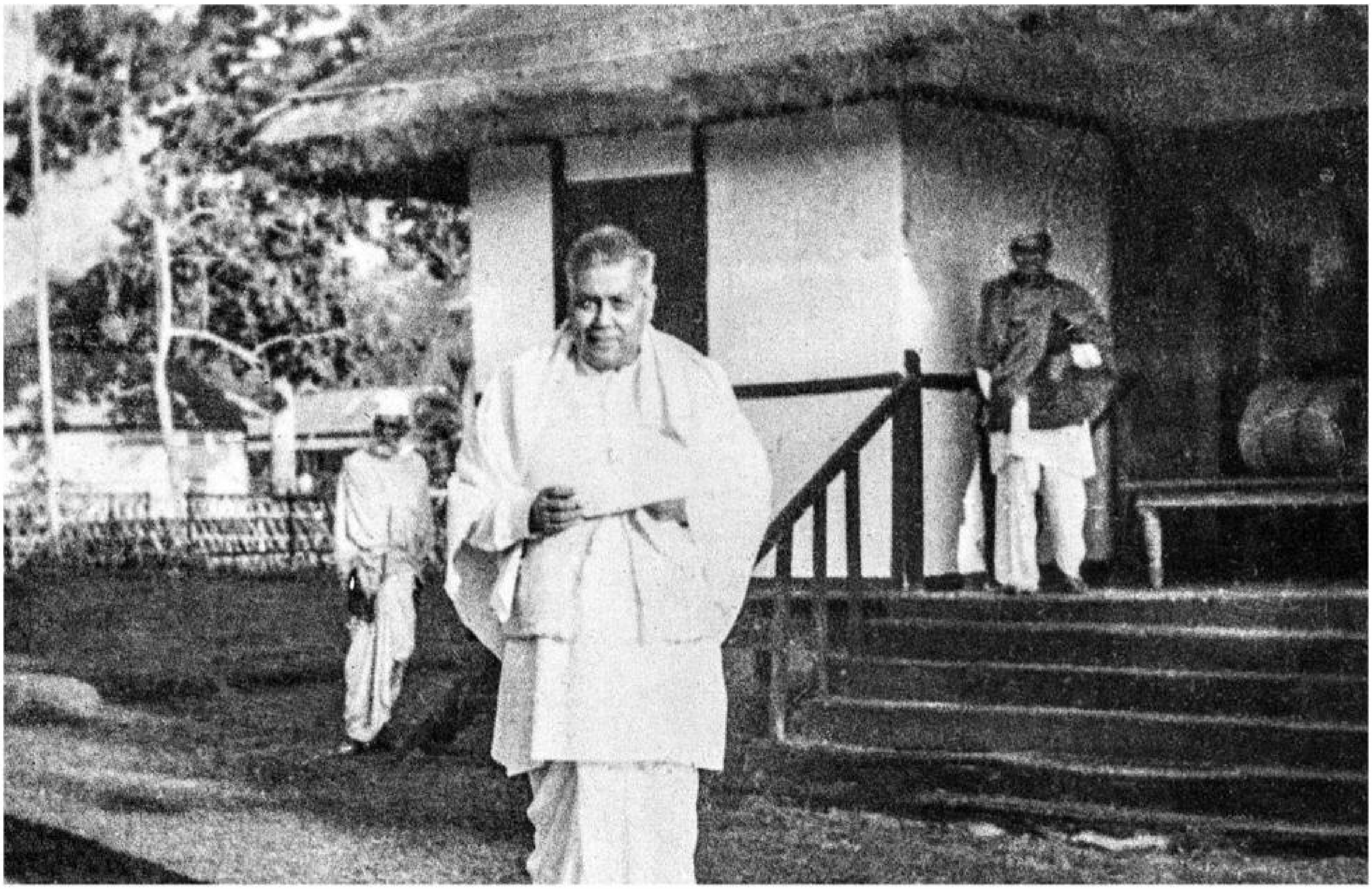
THE EMPOWERER

GOPINATH BORDOLOI (1890-1950)

The architect of Assam, and its first chief minister, Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi saved the northeast from going to East Pakistan

BY HIMANTA BISWA SARMA



COURTESY : BOLIN BORDOLOI YOUNGEST SON OF SRI GOPINATH BORDOLOI

For a pre-Independence Congressman, it was unimaginable to go against party icons such as Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. But Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi, the undisputed leader of Assam, did an act of insubordination to save his own state from the Grouping system of the Cabinet Mission. Acceptance of the plan would have meant Assam's merger with East Pakistan after Partition. Bordoloi forcefully protested, though he got little support except from two Bengal leaders—Congressman Sarat Chandra Bose and Jana Sangh founder Syama Prasad Mookerjee. It was eventually at Mahatma Gandhi's intervention that Bordoloi succeeded in keeping undivided Assam out of the Grouping.

As chairman of the Northeast Frontier (Assam) Tribal and Excluded Areas subcommittee of the Constituent Assembly, Bordoloi conceptualised a new institution for the empowerment of the indigenous people of the northeast, known as the 6th Schedule. As Assam's first chief minister, he played a key role in the state's development—from setting up universities and institutions to maintaining harmony among the region's myriad ethnic groups. Yet, despite his immense contribution to nation-building in a region geographically distant from mainstream India, this great son of India could not find a prominent place in the national narrative, till the NDA government led by A.B. Vajpayee conferred the Bharat Ratna on him in 1999. ■

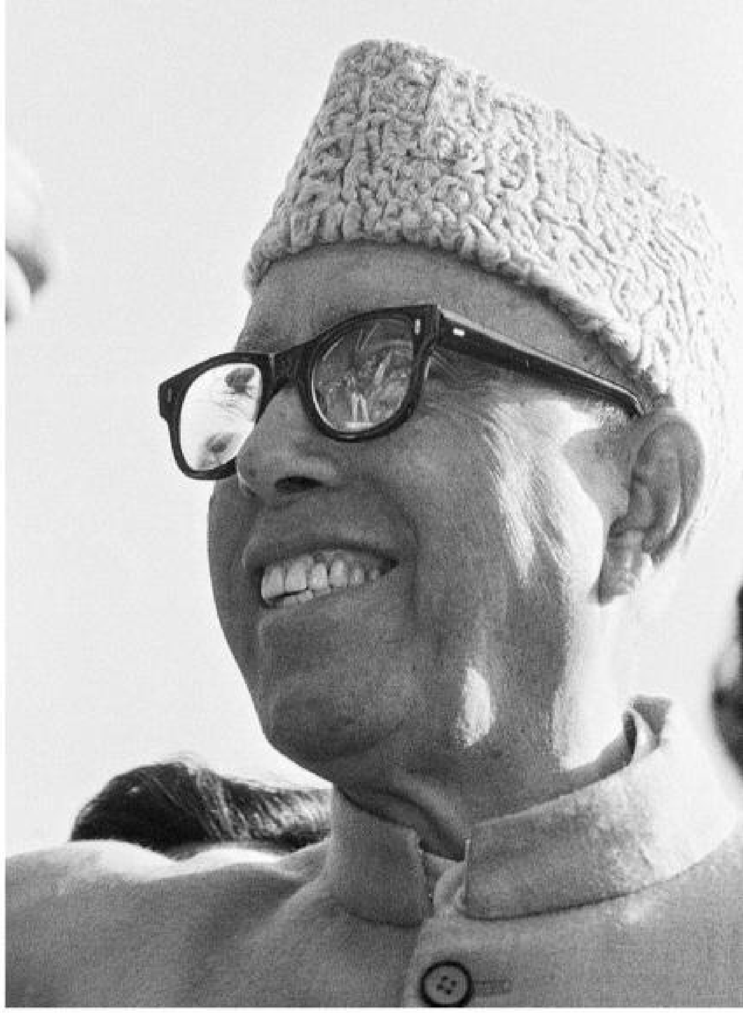
Himanta Biswa Sarma *is the chief minister of Assam*

The Secularist

SHEIKH ABDULLAH
(1905-1982)

If Jammu and Kashmir is a part of India today, it is in a large measure due to him

BY PARKASH SINGH BADAL



I may not have worked closely with Sheikh Abdullah Sahib, but I would put him on the same pedestal as the other icons I've interacted with, such as Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayanji, Vajpayeeji, Chandra Shekharji, Devi Lalji and Annadurai Sahib.

When history records the events, ideas and personalities that shaped India's post-Independence destiny, Sheikh Sahib's name will be up there as a visionary committed to a secular, democratic India. If J&K is an integral part of India today, his contribution to it can hardly be overstated.

Such was his charisma and aura that Sheikh Sahib immediately cast a spell on all around him. His courage and outspoken advocacy of secular ideals has been carried forward by his son, Farooq Sahib, whom he had once deputed to mediate in an issue between Punjab and the Centre. Farooq Sahib did his best to persuade Delhi to give peace a chance in Punjab. In one of my meetings with him, Farooq Sahib suddenly reached deep into his overcoat pockets, pulled out a small pouch and thrust it into my hands. "*Badal sahib, yeh main khasoosan Sheikh Sahib se aap ke liye laya hoon—Kashmir ki mewa aur Kashmir se mohabbat aur khair sagaali ka paigham*." His words—that Sheikh Sahib had specifically sent love and dry fruit from Kashmir for me—were as warm and delightful as the gift itself.

Sheikh Sahib was one of the best-loved and most visionary statesmen from Kashmir. Sadly, he was not understood as well as he deserved to be. ■

Parkash Singh Badal *has been the chief minister of Punjab five times*

BHASKAR PAUL

Grassroots Champion

JYOTI BASU (1914-2010)

The chief minister of West Bengal for 23 years and nearly prime minister, Left politics in India owes it all to him

BY SITARAM YECHURY

He was studying law in London when the rise of Hitler, fascism and India's freedom movement brought him back to India. The Left won big in 1977 under him and he was instrumental in introducing land reforms and decentralisation of democracy. Long before coalition governments became a norm, Basu in 1967-69 proposed the name of Bangla Congress's Ajoy Mukherjee, leader of the second-largest party, as chief minister despite being the leader of the largest group. He was key to the 1989 and 1996 non-Congress coalition governments at the Centre, and the Congress-led one in 2004. He also set an example by voluntarily retiring from the chief minister's office as he felt age and reduced energy level may affect government and party functioning. I can think of only one other leader—Nelson Mandela—doing the same. In 1996, when the party ruled against him becoming prime minister of a coalition government, like a loyal party soldier, he stepped aside. He had a great sense of humour. Since I would talk to different people in different languages, he'd say I was inciting rebellion. ■

Sitaram Yechury *is a Rajya Sabha MP of CPI(M)*

RAGHU RAI

NEW-AGE POLITICIAN

RAJIV GANDHI (1944-1991)

Forced to inherit the nation's mantle after his mother's death, Rajiv gave it his all, firing the country with his young energy and imagination

BY SAM PITRODA

Rajiv Gandhi's contribution to India lies in the seeds he sowed in the mid-'80s to take India into the 21st century. He brought the energy of young, fresh new thinking. I had the opportunity to work closely with him on many important initiatives. I know he was committed to using technology to benefit people at the bottom of the economic pyramid. He encouraged indigenous development, institution-building, civil society, democratisation, decentralisation, privatisation, deregulation, entrepreneurship, creativity, openness and accountability. He was always time-conscious and would tell me, "I wish people recognised they take 30 minutes to convey things that could take 30 seconds."

> **Rajiv was a man in a hurry who wanted to push limits. He brought with him fresh, new thinking**

He provided the political will needed to build telecom and computerisation. Then, we had 2 million telephones, and it used to take 10 years to get a phone line. We had no software export. Now, we are a nation of a connected billion with 750 million smartphones. We generate around $150 billion in software /services export.

I recall wanting to meet Soviet president Mikhail Gorbachev when he was on a state visit to India to brief him on our expertise in these fields. The bureaucracies of both countries were against it. But Rajiv found a solution—as he always he did. He got me to meet Gorbachev after dinner at the prime minister's house and we spoke for over an hour about the information revolution.

Rajiv was a man in a hurry who wanted to push boundaries. He launched technology missions for water, immunisation, literacy, oilseeds, telecom and dairy development. He helped eradicate polio and make India the world's largest vaccines and milk producer. He empowered India to develop e-governance at NIC, supercomputers at C-DAC and nationwide Panchayati Raj to decentralise implementation. These initiatives gave India the direction, capacity and human resources to build a foundation for 21st-century growth. ■

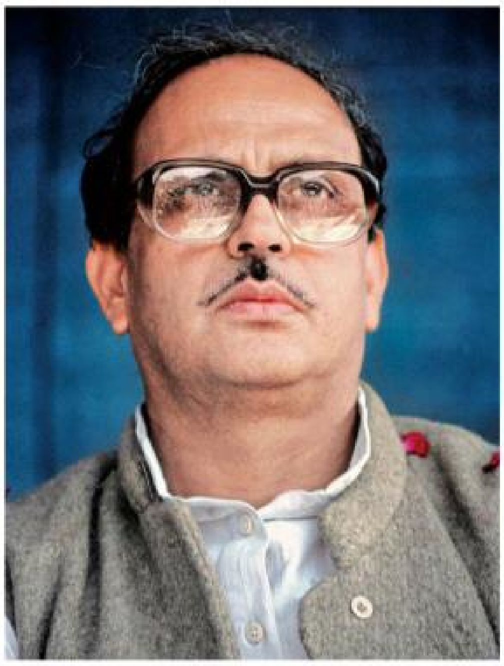
Sam Pitroda *is a telecom engineer, inventor and entrepreneur who was advisor to Rajiv Gandhi when he was prime minister on tech missions*

Brilliant Tactician

V.P. SINGH (1931-2008)

OBC mascot, anti-corruption crusader, secularist...V.P. Singh lived by many principles

BY MOHAN GURUSWAMY



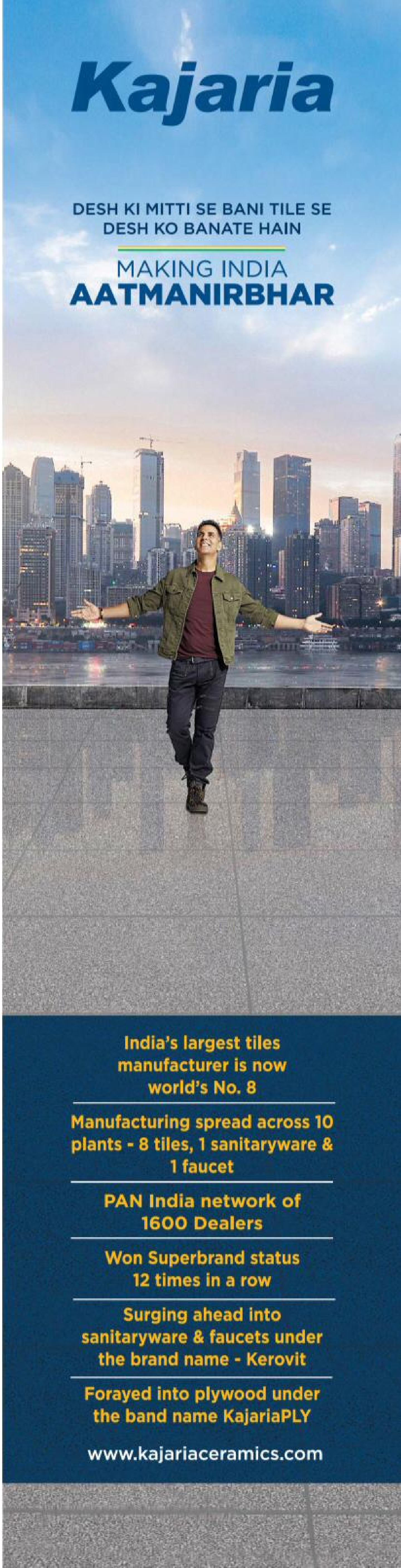
The emergence of V.P. Singh as an independent political entity was one of the climactic events in India's ongoing political drama. It marked the end of Congress as the country's dominant political power. No wonder, L.K. Advani had remarked: "If there wasn't a V.P. Singh, we'd have to create one!" With good reason too. The Congress emerged in 1984 with a daunting 414 Lok Sabha seats and a near plurality with 49.1 per cent. The party with the second-largest vote share was the BJP with 7.7 per cent and a mere two MPs. The next largest party in Parliament was N.T. Rama Rao's TDP with 30 seats and just 4.3 per cent of the popular vote.

I first met V.P. Singh at his house after a call by his brother Sant Bux Singh, a former Congress MP. Sant Bux Singh was a bon viveur and raconteur par excellence. V.P. Singh was just the opposite—abstemious, stunted in conversation and lacking in humour. But in 1987 he exuded an aura. He took on Rajiv Gandhi at his prime and acquired the halo of a man willing to forgo power for principle.

Ironically, the apparent principle for which he was forced to quit pertained to the purchase of the HDW submarines from Germany. When I told V.P. Singh that the submarine deal was a sideshow, and that the Bofors gun deal was the one fraught with consequences, he flared up and told me he had cleared the deal as finance minister and as member of the Cabinet Committee on Security and it was 100 per cent clean. As the events began to unfold, V.P. Singh adopted Bofors as his leitmotif. A new V.P. Singh emerged. He began to connect with the masses and would dramatically wave a paper saying it had Rajiv Gandhi's Bofors related Swiss Bank account number and it will be only be investigated after his displacement from power. Of course, nothing of that sort happened.

Another former prime minister Chandra Shekhar once described him as a man with no strategic vision but a brilliant tactician. Rajiv Gandhi was no match for him and lost the battle. The greatest Indian empire since Ashoka's, Congress began dwindling with time and now is a faint shadow. V.P. Singh began it. ■

***Mohan Guruswamy** was a close associate of V.P. Singh when he was prime minister*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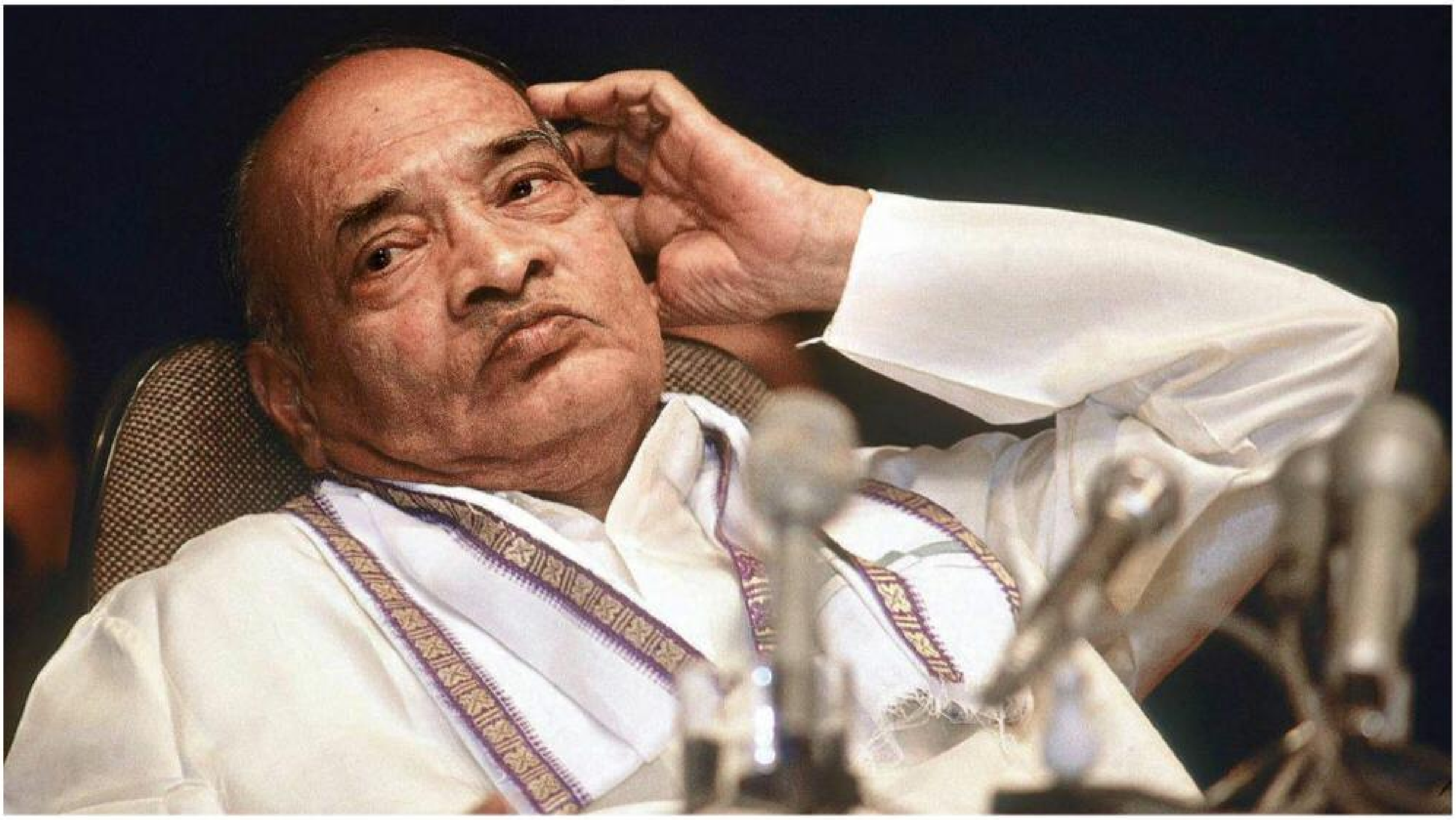
A SILENT DOER

P.V. NARASIMHA RAO (1921-2004)

Polyglot, intellectual and visionary, the 10th prime minister of India changed the course of the country's history with economic reform

BY KAMAL NATH



SHARAD SAXENA

My association with P.V. Narasimha Rao dates back to the Youth Congress days when we worked together on various issues. In 1984, when he became a member of Parliament from Maharashtra's Ramtek Lok Sabha seat, bordering Chhindwara, he always kept an eye on the development works in my constituency. At a time when I got some important trains stopped at Pandhurna railway station, he in a lighter vein said that I must not do so as that creates a ripple effect in his constituency.

He was an intellectual par excellence who could speak in multiple languages and deliberate on several subjects for hours. When he introduced reforms in India through finance minister Manmohan Singh and his cabinet, it was not by design but by default. India's balance of payments situation was so grim that we didn't have money to buy crude oil for the next quarter. In fact, it was very difficult for a socialist like him to move towards market capitalism. To overcome it, he coined the phrase "change with continuity". While he steered India in difficult times, his distress moment came in Ayodhya. It was deceit by BJP leaders which led to communally turbulent times.

It was difficult for a socialist like him to embrace market capitalism but he coined the phrase 'change with continuity'

His finest achievement was that he could have a great finance minister in Dr Singh, which formed the basis of India's enormous economic growth before 2014. We must also not forget the quiet progress India made in becoming a nuclear power in his time. He carried forward Indira Gandhi's Pokhran legacy, though the credit never went to him but to Atal Bihari Vajpayee. ■

Kamal Nath *is the former chief minister of Madhya Pradesh and Union minister*

THE POET PRAGMATIST

ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE (1924-2018)

Gentle in demeanour, he had enough steel in his nerves to conduct India's nuclear tests or the war in Kargil

BY YASHWANT SINHA

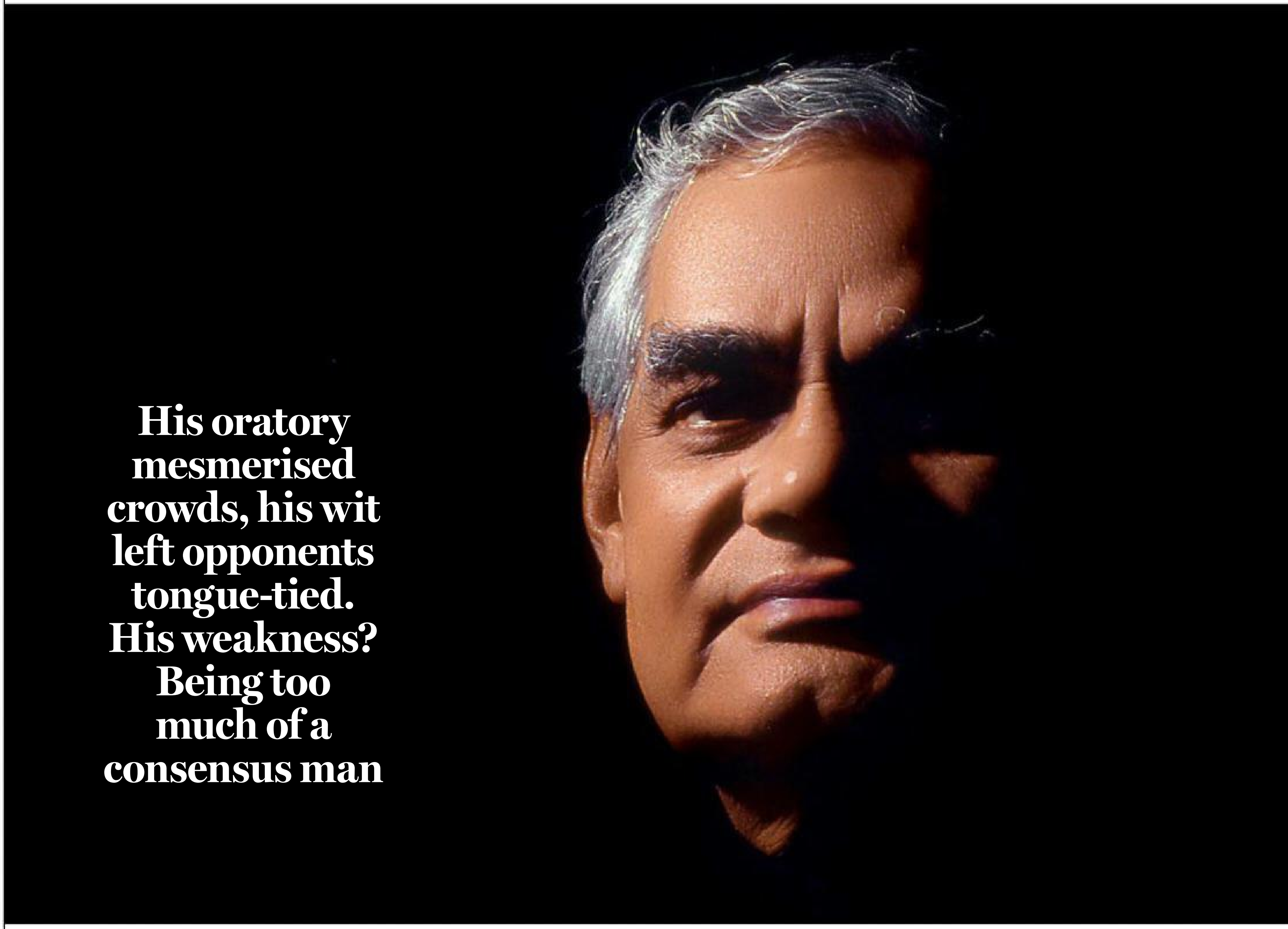
'We are going to conduct nuclear tests. The world will not like it. I want you to be ready to face the consequences,' said Vajpayee with surprising coolness. This was in May 1998. But that was Vajpayee, cool and composed at all times. 'How will all this happen?' This was his response to a team from a leading consultancy firm when it presented a highly theoretical formula to him for economic growth, because he was always rooted in reality. 'Keep the farmers in mind,' was his advice to me for my first budget.

Vajpayee was one of the tallest leaders and one of the greatest prime ministers India ever had. He had risen from the ranks and thus had a deep understanding of India's problems. He understood the world and was clear about India's foreign policy goals. He enjoyed great respect among world leaders and India had a seat on all global high tables during his time.

He mesmerised the crowds with his oratory. He left his adversaries tongue-tied with his wit and repartee in Parliament. His weakness: he was too much of a consensus man.

India was lucky to have him as prime minister. ■

Yashwant Sinha *is a former Union finance minister and foreign affairs minister*


His oratory mesmerised crowds, his wit left opponents tongue-tied. His weakness? Being too much of a consensus man

BANDEEP SINGH

THE POWER OF IDEAS

MANMOHAN SINGH, 88

Architect of the 1991 economic reforms and prime minister of India from 2004-2014, theerudite, soft-spoken, Oxford-educated economist left it to history to be the best judge of his achievements

BY P. CHIDAMBARAM

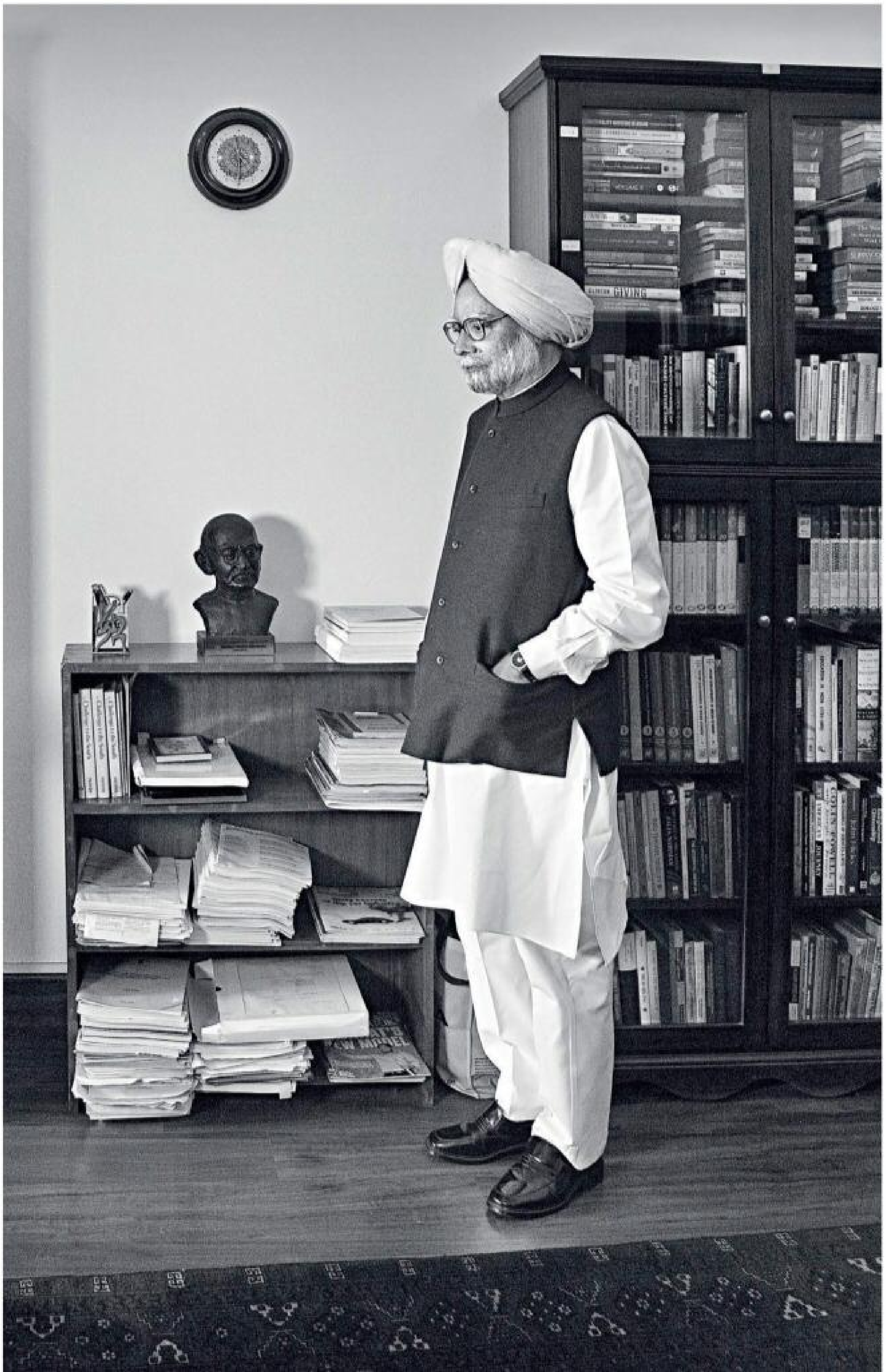
In the 75 years since Independence, there were many leaders who led us diligently on the chosen path. There were also a few leaders who showed us a different path and a journey into unfamiliar territory. Dr Manmohan Singh belonged to the latter category. Dr Singh had to first reinvent himself. He left behind the school of thought that had advocated socialism, the state and public sector occupying the commanding heights of the economy, licences and permits, and trickle-down growth. He asked the people to accept an open economy, liberalisation, free trade, abolition of licences and permits, and globalisation. Many of these concepts were unfamiliar to most people and anathema to the diehard socialists. Yet, Dr Singh persevered.

If Dr Singh's bold adventure had failed, he would have been consigned to oblivion. But, Dr Singh believed in the power of his ideas and never took his hands off the wheel or changed course.

Three achievements stand out: attaining a growth rate of over 9 per cent in three years; quadrupling India's GDP in constant prices; and lifting 270 million people out of poverty. At the end of May 2014, the Indian economy was a leaping tiger. ■

P. Chidambaram *is former Union minister of finance and home affairs*

ROHIT CHAWLA



The PM has striven to instil pride in every Indian as well as a sense of 'nation first'

THE DELIVERER

NARENDRA MODI, 70

A votary of firm and decisive governance, the prime minister has made it his mission to set India on the path of self-reliance

BY SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN

In my decades-long association with Modiji, I have always found him to be a 'man of ideas'. I saw it when he organised the Ekta Yatra in 1991, during my years as the national convenor of the Kesariya Vahini, and again when I was the national president of the BJYM and he was national general secretary in-charge of the Morcha.

Modiji comes across as very strict but he also has a soft and sensitive side. When a number of workers who had risked their lives for the success of the Ekta Yatra could not reach Lal Chowk in Srinagar for flag-hoisting, owing to a change in plans, Modiji wept inconsolably while describing their pain.

He became the chief minister of Gujarat soon after the destructive Bhuj earthquake hit the state. Showing exemplary leadership, he helped reconstruct the decimated parts of the state. Later, he came up with a Gujarat model characterised by rapid industialisation and effective governance.

As prime minister, I have seen him transform India into a glorious, prosperous, powerful and dignified nation by taking bold decisions such as surgical strikes against Pakistan, use of technology to end corruption and demonetisation to curb black money. He has instilled pride and a spirit of 'nation first' in every Indian.

I have witnessed a zeal in him to extend the light of prosperity to those who live on society's margins, whether it is rations for the underprivileged, the PM Awas Yojana, Ujjwala or Ayushman Bharat. He has also introduced the Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme and new farm laws to double farmers' incomes.

The BJP has always had an agenda that it has held sacred. Modiji has succeeded in fulfilling it as prime minister by ensuring the abrogation of Article 370, implementing the CAA and removing all impediments to building the Ram temple in Ayodhya. He has given us slogans like Make in India, Vocal for Local and Aatmanirbharta. The PM has also made cleanliness, the fight against Covid and concern for the environment a people's movement. There has been no one like him on India's political firmament. ■

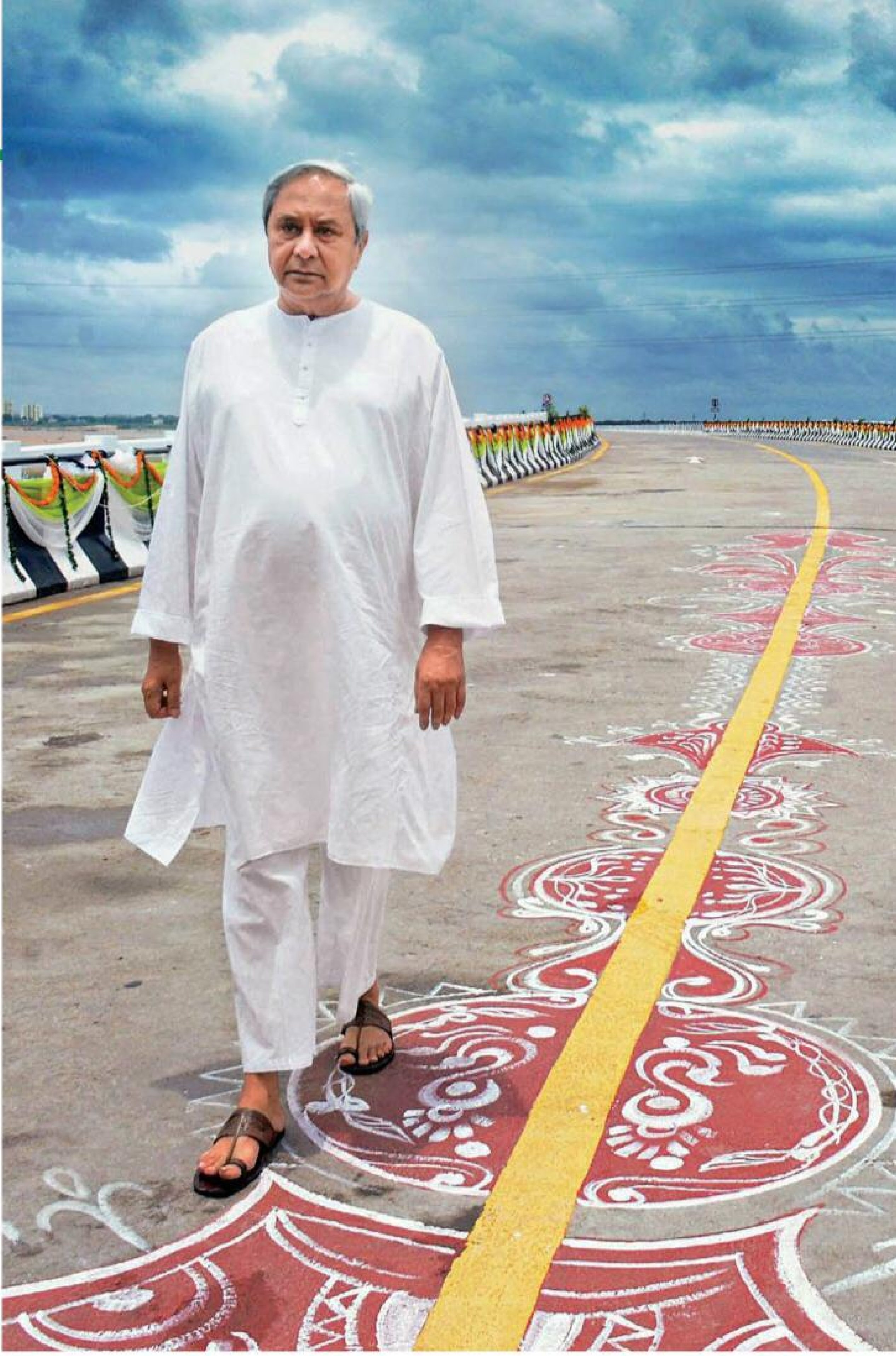
Shivraj Singh Chouhan *is the chief minister of Madhya Pradesh*

SOFT POWER

NAVEEN PATNAIK, 74

True to his nature, he has brought a quiet turnaround in his state, be it fighting cyclones or developing sports and tourism

BY NITISH KUMAR



PTI

I share a long personal rapport with Shri Naveen Patnaik. He is a politician with a difference.

His vision for the upliftment of the downtrodden, his orientation for development with justice and his respect for cultural tradition has always been appreciated by everyone.

When he entered politics, he came with the identity of being respected "Biju babu's" son. In the last 24 years, he has carved out a legacy for himself. People generally change with power and time. But he has not. Naveen Babu whom I saw as a 50-year-old is the same one even today. He has total commitment for his state and country.

People keep asking how Shri Naveen Patnaik has been so successful in politics. I think he answered that in one of his interviews which I quote—"I work for the people...not for elections." He has managed to convey to the people of Odisha that they are his family.

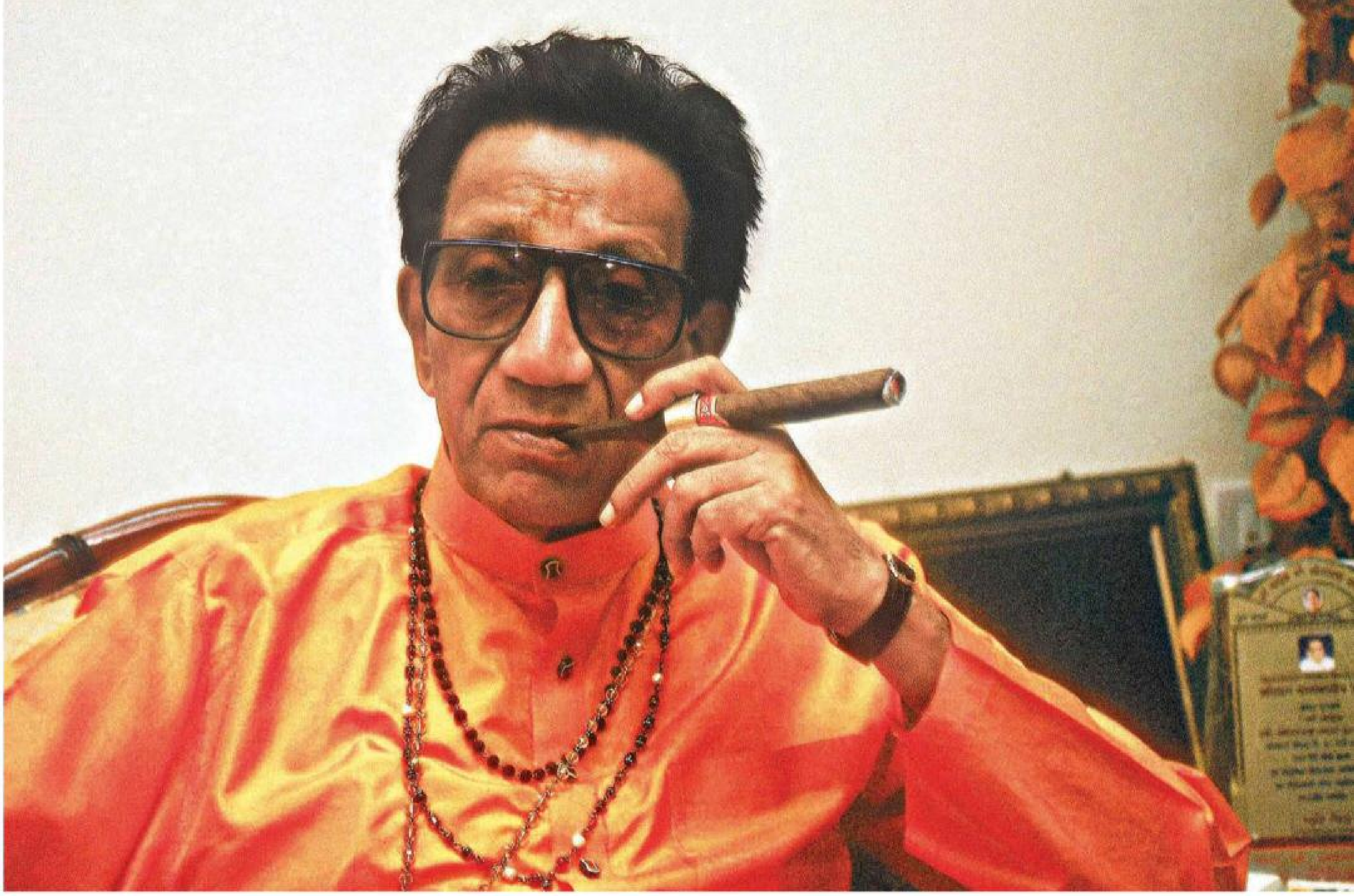
And he keeps winning election after election. His work speaks much louder than his words. I am told that in his election for the fifth term, he spoke just one line and swept the elections. He asked the people: "Are you happy?"

When Shri Naveen Patnaik took charge in early 2000, Odisha was passing through difficult times. In the past two decades, it has come a long way with the natural calamity-prone state being equipped to face these disasters. His handling of the cyclones has won national and international praise. The state has made its mark in the field of sports and tourism and has been maintaining an appreciable growth rate.

History will remember him as a decent person, full of confidence and a socialite with ideals and commitment. ■

> **His work speaks louder than his words. For his 5th term, all he asked his people was: 'Are you happy?' They voted him**

Nitish Kumar *is the chief minister of Bihar*



THE DAREDEVIL

BAL THACKERAY (1926-2012)

He may not have held elected office, but the Shiv Sena founder had a firm hold on Maharashtra's politics, bringing to it a radical nativist sentiment that made him a 'Hindu Hriday Samraat'

BY NITIN GADKARI

Once, during a Lok Sabha election, we were reluctant to finalise the candidature of a Shiv Sainik in a Vidarbha constituency because the caste equations went against him. When he heard about it, Balasaheb Thackeray roared, "I don't attribute any importance to caste and creed in public life." The candidate was finalised and he went on to win the election.

Determined, courageous, daredevil yet kind-hearted. These are the attributes of Balasaheb's personality that I try and emulate in my public life. From being a cartoonist to a political stalwart who shaped the politics of Maharashtra, he encountered many challenges, but met each one of them with rare fortitude. He loved me like his own son. To my mind, even today Balasaheb is a synonym for courage.

> **He was determined, courageous yet kind-hearted and met challenges with rare fortitude**

He would call me 'Roadkari', for helping fulfil his infrastructure dreams. He never hesitated to heap praise on me. So much so that when some pictures for a photobook on him were to be shot, he asked Raj Thackeray to call me. I went, and we posed for several photographs.

Politics is a selfish game. So, when you encounter a large-hearted leader like Balasaheb who thinks beyond party lines in the interest of the people, you cannot help but get impressed. Apart from my *swayamsevak* training, and guidance from RSS, ABVP, BYJM stalwarts, Atalji and Balasaheb are my icons. I will forever cherish my memories of him. ■

Nitin Gadkari *is the Union minister for road transport and highways*

MOTHER COURAGE

MAMATA BANERJEE, 66

From the Left in 2011 to the BJP in 2021, Mahishasurmardini Mamata has slayed many a demonic tendency in Bengal's polity

BY MAHUA MOITRA

SUBIR HALDER

A president doesn't have to be brilliant," US journalist Peggy Noonan wrote 25 years ago. "He doesn't have to be clever. You can hire clever. But you can't buy courage and decency, and you can't rent a strong moral sense. A president must bring those things with him." Ever since I joined the Trinamool over 11 years , perhaps the question I get asked the most by family, friends and curious strangers is "what is Mamatadi really like?"

When the BJP a few months ago used their muscle to try and bully Bengal into submission, she, and she alone, had the courage to reassure the state that she would protect its people and its culture from being subsumed into a boiling pot of hatred and bigotry. When there was an unfortunate bus accident in my area that killed over 40 people, she waited up all night while the post-mortems were completed and the bodies sent home. When she saw two little school children walking without shoes, she stopped her car and instructed the education minister to ensure all school children in Bengal were provided shoes along with books.

The answer is this—she is quite simply the most courageous, the most decent and the most real person I have known. And she intrinsically knows right from wrong.

For all those of you wondering how Mamata Banerjee defied the money, machine and the machinations of a relentless BJP in Bengal assembly elections and defied all odds to come back to power with the highest-ever majority, the answer lies here—courage, decency and a strong moral sense but with an incredible connection directly with people on the ground. People can experience Mamata Banerjee first-hand and she can directly feel their pulse. And best of all, she's always the one to stand up for me with a smile if someone teases me about my oversized sunglasses! ■

> **What is Mamata like? The bravest, the most decent and the most real person I've ever known**

Mahua Moitra *is a Trinamool Congress MP*

Consensus Builder

SONIA GANDHI, 74

She made the country, its culture and its people her own, while being the anchor for India's grand old party and the fulcrum for opposition forces

BY ASHOK GEHLOT

BANDEEP SINGH

Coming from a different country and culture, it could not have been easy for a young girl to marry into a historic family that led the country towards Independence. Yet Soniaji effortlessly embraced, embodied and enriched the culture of the country she married into.

After Indiraji died in her arms on October 31, 1984, and Rajivji on May 21, 1991, Soniaji was completely shattered and refused to join politics despite Congressmen's insistence. It was only after a leadership crisis in the party that she agreed to assume its mantle. It was a tough decision but the realisation that the Congress was indispensable for a healthy democracy forced her to accept and become Congress president on April 6, 1998, despite the Congress being ridiculed for not able to find a single Indian in a nation of 100 crore people to lead the party.

Both in her political and personal journey, Soniaji has faced tough choices. Each time, she has risen to the challenge

In 2004, the UPA won a mandate in her name but she decided not to become prime minister and handed over the mantle to Dr Manmohan Singhji. *Forbes* named her the third most powerful woman in the world in 2004.

What surprises and impresses me is the way she carefully chooses the words to speak. She minutely assesses the impact every word might have on her audience. She may read out her speeches but what goes into them is entirely her own. Once while preparing her speech aboard a chopper in which we were flying during a campaign trail, she turned to me and asked for a better word in Hindi that she wanted to use in her speech. Even before I could think up of something, she herself came up with an excellent synonym. Likewise, I always find her up to date on how various castes should be given representation. She involves workers, leaders and the masses before arriving at any crucial decisions, including the appointment of PCC chiefs. That is why everyone feels involved in her decision-making.

Both in her personal and political journey, Soniaji has faced difficult choices. However, each time, she has risen to the challenge admirably. ■

Ashok Gehlot *is the chief minister of Rajasthan*

UMESH REVANKAR,
Vice Chairman & Managing Director,
Shriram Transport Finance Company Ltd.

STFC: POWERING A COMMUNITY & NATION ON THE GROWTH HIGHWAY

"Recall the face of the poorest and weakest man you have seen and ask yourself if this step you contemplate is going to be any use to him."
– said Mahatma Gandhi in his well-remembered address to the nation.

Since independence, this has been the consistent challenge faced by our policymakers. Unfortunately, policies that should alter the lives of the weaker sections of society have hardly reached the people it was meant for.

But then, challenges are opportunities for visionaries.

Such an opportunity saw the founding of Shriram Transport Finance Company Ltd., way back in 1979 in the erstwhile Madras. The desire to empower the marginalised, economically weak sections of society manifested itself in the form of a Motor Finance Company. It aimed to provide finance to people outside the banking system's ambit who wanted to buy commercial vehicles and earn a livelihood. It gave them the hope and support to chart their destinies and give their families a better and progressive life.

When an organisation looks beyond profits and focuses on how it can change the lives of its customers and the community at large, it becomes an institution. This in short, explains the journey of Shriram Transport Finance Company across its 45 years of existence. The company always believed in trusting and placing confidence in the customer as the most crucial step. As Mr. Umesh Revankar, Vice Chairman and Managing Director STFC says, "Each borrower is a highly trustworthy individual. We are helping him achieve his dreams of providing a better life for his family".

Over the decades, the company has gone far beyond being just a financier. The company welcomed the customers into the STFC family and genuinely cared and looked after their well-being. The grateful trucking community spread the word wherever the road went, helping the firm spread its branches from major cities to even the remotest villages in India.
In the words of Mr. Revankar, "I would like to be the customers' financial friend, a friend in need. I want to be here to help him buy the vehicle, insure it, repair it etc."

Through relentless efforts and continuous focus on benefiting the community, the company grew bigger and paved the way for more players to enter the industry. As a result, more funds began to flow in, and the rate of interests dropped. That, in turn, meant market expansion and happier customers.

But for the leaders of the company, the vision was also to create a holistic environment of long-term welfare for the entire community, including the women and children of the family. They believed that by empowering every family member, they would establish an ecosystem of continuous growth.

Today, STFC offers scholarships to students in the truckers' families so that they can pursue education right up to the graduate levels. It goes the extra mile in providing a good healthcare system to the truckers who are working tirelessly. From primary healthcare to screening, to diagnosis and treatment to referrals for communicable and noncommunicable diseases, it organises camps and healthcare programs for the family members, along with active education and awareness programs that add teeth to this initiative.

To support the youth, the company helps them with LMV/ HMV Driving Training and organises training programs for driving specialised vehicles like Oxygen Transporters.

The company also holds the belief that the only way to sustain and accelerate growth is by empowering the women in our country. Mr. Revankar said, "When women in the family are educated, they can steer everyone towards the right direction." STFC has been working towards encouraging women to come to the forefront and come on board as owners or partners.

With technology becoming an intrinsic part of our lives, the company is also planning to create an app that would make it easy for the trucking community to access their services on the move. The ambition is to use the power of technology to provide smooth, convenient, and uninterrupted services to the community.

As India aspires to become a $10 trillion economy by 2030, with road infrastructure being the key driver in that endeavour, a motivated Mr. Revankar says, "We are passionate about this business and hence are always seeking more ways to serve the community and nation. Today, the future holds the promise of a green highway and an economy running on electric vehicles and we would leave no stone unturned in ushering in a new era of growth, productivity and efficiency."

The Shriram Transport Finance Company Ltd. is looking forward to doing its bit for the industry in aligning itself to the changing scenario. The journey for the next 55 years starts now.

GOODS
CARRIER
TATA
ALL INDIA PERMIT
NATIONAL PERMIT

NAMAS BHOJANI

The Fountainhead

J.R.D. TATA (1904-1993)

Jehangir Ratanji Dadabhoy Tata was not just a business titan. The institutions he established, from hospitals and research facilities to art foundations, have shaped the fabric of modern India

BY AZIM PREMJI

Jeh's life was a true embodiment of the trajectory of India in the 20th century. Only a few human beings can be the carriers of the spirit of their times—in fact, not only the carriers, but also the makers of the spirit of their times.

He was born into an extraordinary family, but what he made of it transformed it into one of the true bulwarks of India. On the one hand, his family founded and ran the widest possible array of successful businesses, and on the other, some of the most important institutions at the core of the development of this country. The Indian Institute of Science, the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, the National Centre for Performing Arts and the Tata Memorial Hospital are just a few amongst the best-known ones. If you travel around India, you will find institutions and civil society organisations, small and large, which grew from the philanthropic spirit that Jeh seeded. The businesses that he founded, from TCS to Titan, continue to be models of success.

Truly, if we were to count the makers of modern India, Jeh would be amongst the highest in that pantheon. ■

Azim Premji *is the founder-chairman of Wipro*

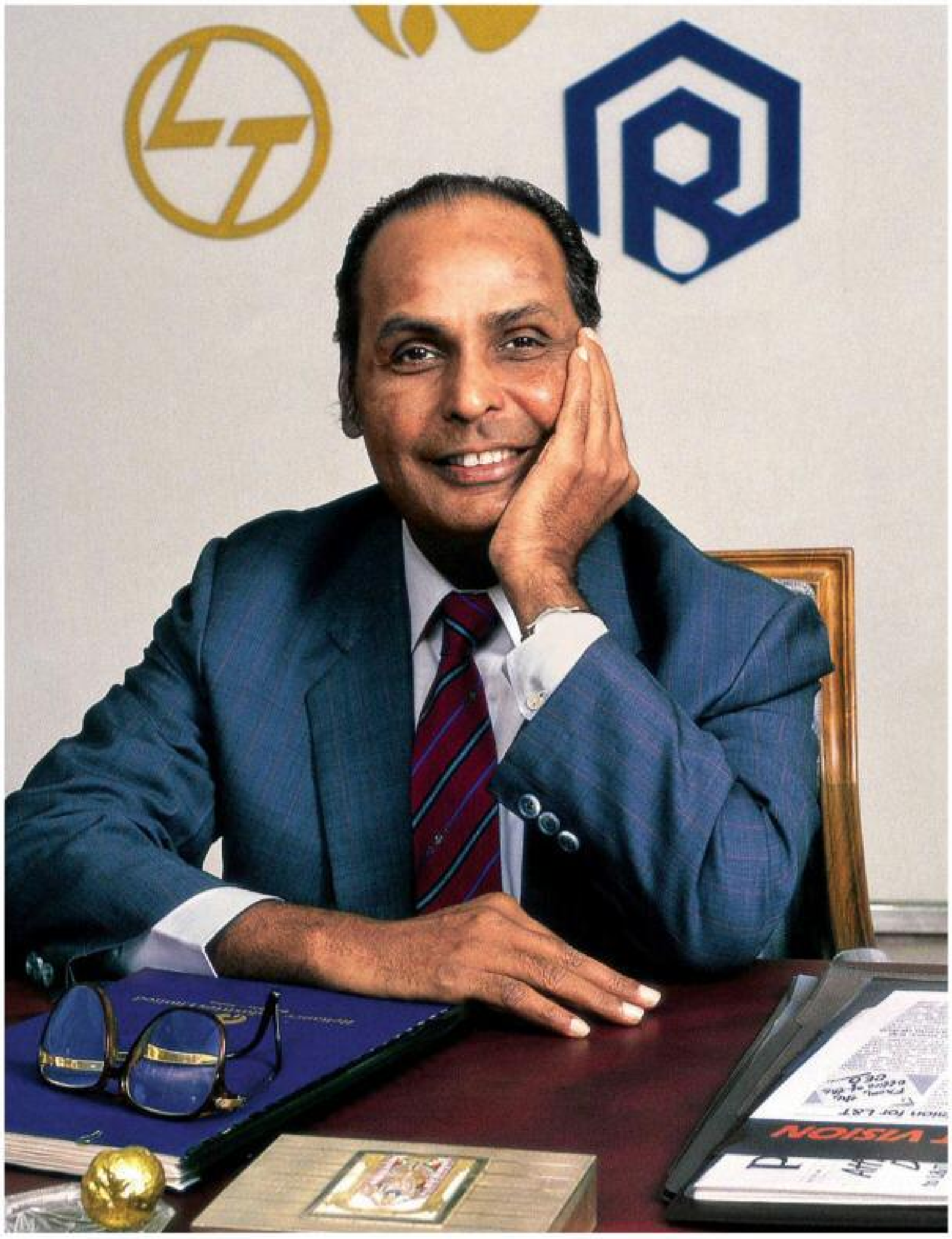
MAN WITH THE MIDAS TOUCH

DHIRUBHAI AMBANI

(1932-2002)

The founder and former chairman of India's largest private sector company, Reliance industries, is credited with creating a vibrant stock market culture among the Indian middle class

BY TARUN DAS



RAGHU RAI

When the history of independent India is written, one person—Dhirubhaiji—will figure prominently. In this, seven characteristics are striking. First, he operated his businesses at a time when the economy was being micromanaged by the government. But this environment did not hold him back—he was a pioneer, a first-generation entrepreneur. Second, he was, in true entrepreneurial spirit, ready to take risks, setting an example for others. Third, he did not allow hurdles to stop him from building an industrial empire. His strategic approach was to find solutions—he was in the solutions business. Fourth, he was a problem-solver with enormous energy and drive. He built an outstanding team of professionals to implement his dream. Success followed. Fifth, he had other essential qualities—courage and perseverance. He was running a marathon with great determination. Sixth, he had very high aspirations as he built his empire from scratch. And this, in an environment of multiple regulations and controls. Seventh, he believed in India's future. He was building a New India. This faith and confidence was an integral part of Dhirubhaiji's makeup. Leadership was in his blood. He personified the concept of 'BILL'—'Build Institution, Leave Legacy'. Dhirubhai Ambani built Reliance into an institution and left a legacy which today is going from strength to strength in multiple sectors and technologies. ■

Dhirubhai Ambani personified the concept of 'BILL'—to build an institution and leave a legacy

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***Tarun Das** is chairman, Institute of Economic Growth and a former chief mentor and DG of the Confederation of Indian Industry*

GETTY IMAGES

GENTLE GIANT

RATAN TATA, 83

Ratan Tata transformed the Tata Group into a diversified behemoth and engineered several overseas acquisitions

BY AJAY PIRAMAL

> **Pragmatism, clear thinking and a commitment to philanthropy are hallmarks of Ratan's leadership**

Over the many decades that I have known Ratan, and more recently, over the past five years that I have been on the Board of Tata Sons, I have been privy to his inimitable quiet leadership style as he has led the Group to achieve its iconic status. With Ratan driving various pathbreaking and innovative initiatives, the Group's revenues increased by over 40 times during his tenure.

Ratan has continued to strengthen the Group's culture, built on the strong foundation of core Tata values. Deeply entrenched in its people, its business decisions and in its daily functioning, these values have stood the Group in good stead. They were key to how Tata Sons resolved the dispute with NTT Docomo.

He deftly steered the Group's global expansion as various Tata companies acquired global brands such as the UK-based Tetley and Corus, Korea's Daewoo Commercial Vehicles, and Jaguar and Land Rover from the Ford Motor Company, the largest-ever acquisition by an Indian automotive firm. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) went public and Tata Motors was listed on the NYSE, augmenting the Group's international power and recognition.

He was instrumental in the business expansion and conceptualisation of cars like the Tata Nano and the Tata Indica. Ratan brought to fruition his dream to build India's first truly indigenously designed and manufactured car, the Indica, which won the nation's heart. In 2003, TCS became the first Indian software company to cross $1 billion in revenues and went public in 2004 with the largest IPO in India, raising nearly $1.2 billion. A prolific investor in Indian start-ups, his investments are known to emerge as giants in their respective sectors over time.

As a philanthropist, Ratan Tata's reputation is unmatched. He continues to be closely involved in Tata Trusts which focuses on child malnutrition, healthcare, literacy, social justice and rural development.

Not one to shy away from tough decisions, he has successfully navigated through many difficult ones, including that with the seven satraps at Tata Group early on in his career, or the more recent matter with Cyrus Mistry. Pragmatism, immense clarity of thought and deep commitment to philanthropy and impacting lives are true hallmarks of Ratan's leadership style. He is modest, calm, understated, kind and a futurist—which makes him a unique leader of global acclaim. ■

***Ajay Piramal** is chairman, Piramal Group*

Domestic Champ

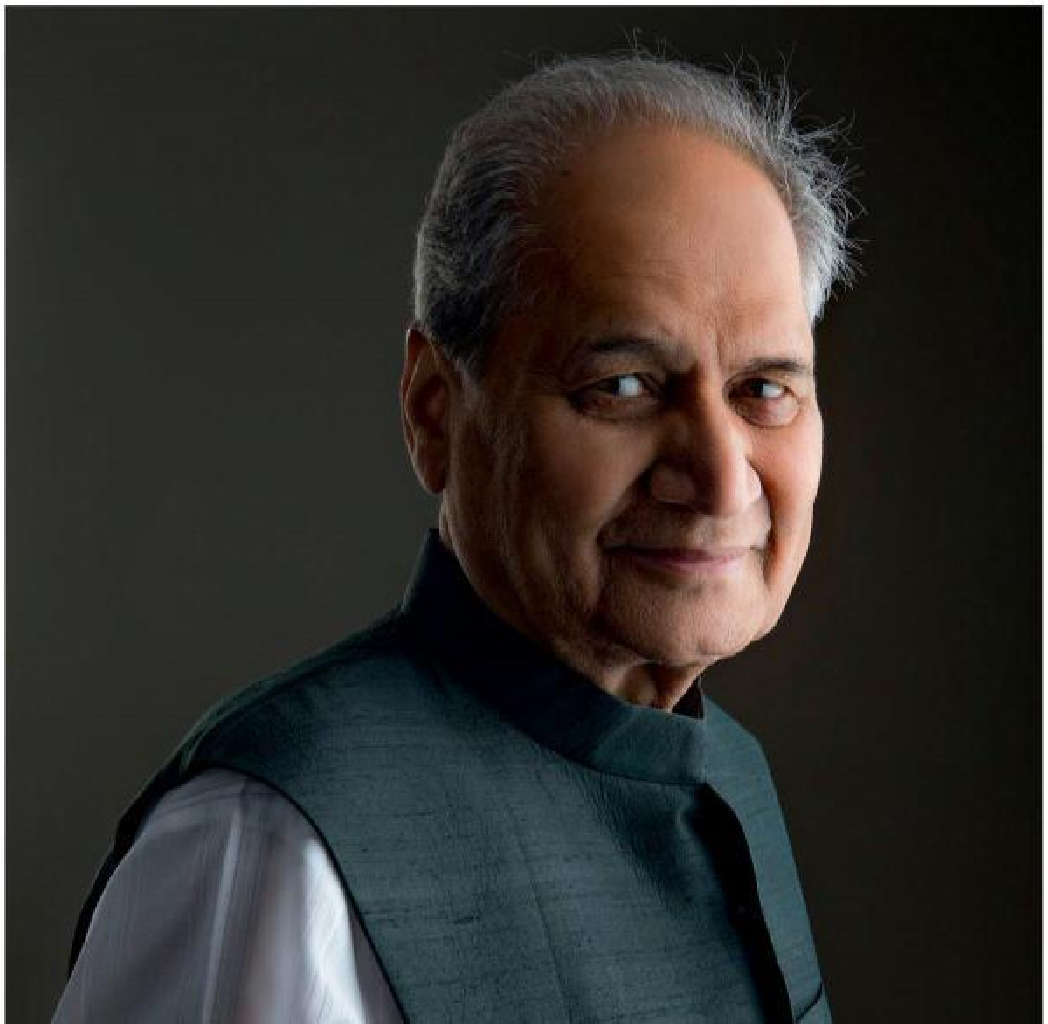
RAHUL BAJAJ, 83

The chairman emeritus of the Bajaj Group, also a former member of the Rajya Sabha, has been a vocal proponent of domestic manufacturing, making his brand of two-wheelers a household name in India

BY VIKRAM KIRLOSKAR

I first met Rahulbhai in the early 1980s, when I went to see him at his office at the corner of the factory building at Bajaj Auto. I was trying to sell him machine tools, and he gave me a very patient hearing. I got to know him over the years, mainly at CII (Confederation of Indian Industry). He is a role model in many ways. I think he was one of the first Indian manufacturers to scale up. Bajaj Auto wanted to localise all capital equipment purchases, and demanded a huge improvement in quality and productivity from its suppliers, setting a new benchmark. Rahulbhai understood the market and retained a strong focus on his business at a time when diversification was the buzz word. During the years we interacted, I learnt it was important to do the right thing, with continued emphasis on good governance and ethics, and to speak your mind confidently. This lesson has stood the test of time. Despite our age difference, it is always a pleasure to spend time with him, and enjoy a plate of *chaat* with him. He has inculcated his work ethic and values to the next generation and I wish them every success. ■

Vikram Kirloskar *is vice chairman, Toyota Kirloskar*



RACHIT GOSWAMI

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75TH INDEPENDENCE DAY SPECIAL

HIGH ON VALUE

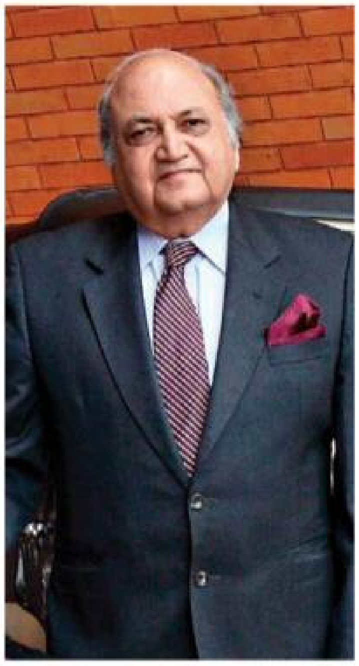
KESHUB MAHINDRA, 97

The chairman emeritus of the Mahindra Group transformed the manufacturer of Willys Jeep into a conglomerate spanning automobiles, defence and energy

BY R.C. BHARGAVA

In 1986, Keshub Mahindra's daughter Leena wed Sanjay Labroo. I attended the wedding as Sanjay's guest. All ceremonies were held in Keshub's house. There was no five-star hotel entertainment, the guest list was small, there was no ostentation, and everything was done simply and elegantly. I realised that Keshub Mahindra was very different from most other ultra-rich people, and had an excellent value system.

This value system led to his building one of India's largest and most successful diversified industrial empires. He was the leader of Mahindra & Mahindra for almost 50 years and the growth and success of the company is essentially because of the culture he introduced. Keshub insisted on high standards of ethics everywhere. He set a personal example and ensured that no company asset was ever used for the benefit of his family. He was one of the earliest promoters to trust professional managers to run his company. He treated all employees as colleagues—a watchman was as important to him as a general manager. The workers and the union trusted him—these were all ingredients of his success. As chairman emeritus, he is now about to score a century. May God bless him. ■


RACHIT GOSWAMI

R.C. Bhargava *is chairman, Maruti Suzuki*

BANDEEP SINGH

The Adventurer

MUKESH AMBANI, 64

As chairman of Reliance Industries, Ambani transformed the petrochemicals major into a hydrocarbons, telecom and retail powerhouse

BY DEEPAK PAREKH

Mukesh Ambani. The family name conjures up associations with perseverance, adventure and with maverick methods of enterprise, as immortalised by Dhirubhai Ambani.

Mukesh, in sync with his family's pursuit of largeness and excellence, has been a beacon of industry in modern-day India. His brand, Reliance, supports a universe of growth, farsighted ploughing in readiness for the next generation in industry and a compulsion to rise way above mediocrity.

I knew Dhirubhai; I could sense his restlessness to conquer new vistas, to expand and to create both wealth and stability in a slowly developing nation.

I see the same glint in Mukesh; his calculated farsightedness, his ability to execute supremely and to share with the nation, his Reliance; his brand of indomitable adventure. He is unique; his persona pervades well before he walks into a room. His family has been his security, encompassing his vision to contribute to a free and bustling Indian economy.

I wish him and his Reliance family a vastness, with which only the sky can compete. ■

Deepak Parekh *is the chairman of HDFC*

FOREIGN VISION

ADITYA VIKRAM BIRLA (1943-1995)

The former chairman of the Aditya Birla Group was instrumental in the diversification of the group and for its large-scale overseas foray

BY DR GITA PIRAMAL

SHARAD SAXENA

In the early 1990s, the Aditya Birla Group became the world's #1 producer of viscose, ditto for palm oil, the third largest producer of insulators and the sixth largest producer of carbon black: all in all, it had 70 plants. To keep modernising, updating, de-bottlenecking, cost cutting and increasing production by technological improvements became Birla's mantra. In this, the *partha*, a centuries-old Marwari system of financial monitoring and control, remained sacrosanct.

At the time, the Indian business environment was tough territory. "There were so many restrictions, so many clearances were required," shared Birla in an interview, "going overseas was the only recourse if I had to make it on my own." By 1990, shortly before P.V. Narasimha Rao's *perestroika* moment, Birla had built a Rs 12 billion (Rs 1,200 crore) overseas empire of 12 companies in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines. That number would balloon to 17 companies in 14 countries with aggregate sales of Rs 52 billion (Rs 5,200 crore). His wife Rajashree recalled, "When I asked which is your favourite factory, he responded with 'the one which is in trouble, because a father always has a soft corner for the weakest child'." ■

> **By 1990, Birla had built a Rs 1,200 crore overseas empire, spread across four countries**

***Dr Gita Piramal** is a business historian and author*

75TH INDEPENDENCE DAY SPECIAL

THE CZAR OF SMALL CARS

R.C. BHARGAVA, 87

The former CEO and current chairman of Maruti Suzuki was instrumental in helping millions of Indians become car owners

BY AMITABH KANT

If there is anyone who exemplifies the qualities of courage, risk-taking, determination and innovation, it is R.C. Bhargava. His risk-taking ability came to the fore when he quit the IAS (Indian Administrative Service) to lead a fledgling company, Maruti. This was a courageous move, as he swapped job security to build a company, with all the challenges involved, especially in an India before reforms. He navigated these challenges astutely, emerging as a titan of Indian manufacturing.

The company he built is one of the giants of Indian industry and among the most trusted brands in India. He did not just build a company; he built an institution.

He has the rare ability of having both a big picture view and a keen eye for detail. In India's setup, the ability to get things done is another rare skill—one he possesses in spades. It is for these qualities that I have always admired him. His book, *Getting Competitive: A Practitioner's Guide for India*, provides key lessons to boost India's manufacturing sector, crucial to generating growth and employment. I interact with him regularly to seek his advice and guidance and have always found him full of energy, fresh ideas and updated on all the latest technologies. ■

***Amitabh Kant** is CEO, NITI Aayog*

BANDEEP SINGH

Tech Titan

N.R. NARAYANA MURTHY, 74

The co-founder of Infosys, Murthy is feted for having put India on the global IT map

BY KIRAN KARNIK

VIVAN MEHRA

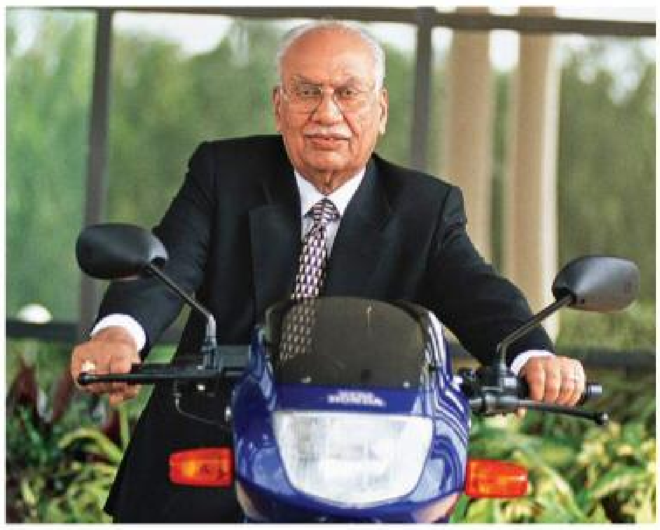
The son of a small-town school teacher from Karnataka, Murthy is today a globally-recognised doyen of India's phenomenally successful IT industry. He ignited entrepreneurial dreams in millions by demonstrating that intellectual capital can help a middle-class Indian create a billion-dollar enterprise.

Under Murthy, Infosys has been a path-breaker. He conceived and implemented the business model responsible for the growth of Infosys and Indian IT at large. Infosys was the first Indian IT company to list on a US stock exchange, and is a leader in setting corporate governance benchmarks. While it created wealth, it was a pioneer in distributing it too, through employee stock options that have made over 30,000 of its employees millionaires.

A great believer in the virtues of integrity, honesty and transparency, Murthy has mentored many to become leaders. Belying his stature and demeanour, he is a fun person, with a great sense of humour, and enjoys listening to music. Despite all the adulation and innumerable high awards, Murthy is all humility and grace. Of course, this does not stop him from speaking his mind in clear, direct and forceful terms! ■

Kiran Karnik *is former president, Nasscom*

VIVAN MEHRA



Mobike Mogul

BRIJMOHAN LALL MUNJAL

(1923-2015)

The founder of Hero MotoCorp transformed what was a small bicycles firm in the 1940s into a formidable two-wheeler company, now one of the world's largest

BY RAHUL BAJAJ

I was very fond of Brijmohan Lallji and have often publicly referred to him as my Guru. He had amazing qualities of the head and the heart and was really a unique individual. Over the years, we fought very fiercely in the marketplace, first with Hero Honda, then with Hero MotoCorp. There was no give and take. Yet, we remained very good friends. Whenever we met, he gave me tremendous regard and I received genuine love and affection, which was not the case with some of my other competitors. Over a forty-year relationship, I had not heard a single negative thing about Brijmohan Lallji. I believe he treated his staff as members of his family, in a manner none of us can do.

His multi-faceted personality and his ability to forge excellent relationships made him stand out as a tall industry leader. I have met him only at various industry functions, and even in those formal occasions, he came across as a great personality. He built a great company through his temperament and his character. He ensured that there was no misunderstanding with any of his stakeholders, from employees to suppliers and dealers. ■

***Rahul Bajaj** is chairman emeritus of the Bajaj Group*

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION & PUBLIC RELATIONS
GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM

SIKKIM

SCALING NEWER HEIGHTS OF GROWTH AND PROGRESS

The State Government of Sikkim, led by the Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri P S Tamang, has propelled the State to newer heights of growth and progress in various sectors, after taking over in 2019. In only a span of two years, the government has made significant progress and brought about essential developments.

It has been the sedulous effort of the Hon'ble Chief Minister and his sturdy leadership that has brought about the much-required changes for Sikkim. In spite of the pandemic, the state, under his guidance has managed to combat COVID 19 effectively, curbing many economic and development disasters without deferring health sector as the primary concern.

The tourism sector, which contributes substantially to the state's revenue and serves as a source of livelihood for many has been remoulded to meet the safety protocols as well to provide convenience to the tourists and the tourism stakeholders/service providers, both. The tourism department converted its functions into digital mode for permits, registration of tourism enterprises thereby avoiding gathering of people in places which has resulted in better management and monitoring. The Department Portal has been constructive to cater to various information and queries related to the sector. The concept of 'Travel Card' was implemented that provides accurate database on tourist traffic and also enables to observe and surveil tourists' movements, in case they test COVID positive while in the state.

A robust Standard Operating Procedures for resumption of tourism industry through Unlock 1.0 was established that helped in the smooth functioning during the tourist season in 2020. Sikkim has efficiently been able to keep abreast with the functioning of the tourism sector and managing to curb any ill effects brought about by the pandemic. Keeping in mind the safety and the guidelines, the state, under the Hon'ble Chief Minister's able leadership, aims to attract bigger number of tourists in the future, with the 'Visit Sikkim 2022' campaign that will include series of tourism fair and festivals.

SIKKIM'S FIGHT AGAINST COVID 19

- RTPCR VIRAL Diagnostic Lab set up.
- Dedicated Covid Care Centres (CCC) with quarantine and isolation facilities in all the districts.
- Frontline workers provided with financial incentives as well as financial assistance to stranded Sikkimese people including students and patients.
- Dedicated state portal for COVID 19 launched.
- Free ration provided to the needy families and stranded labourers.
- Mass vaccination drives throughout the state
- Door-to-door COVID care kit provided.
- A COVID control/war room established to ease out communication between the doctors and COVID infected patients through a system of CCTV cameras.
- Augmentation of health infrastructure, setting up of oxygen plant in the state.
- RAT testing in all rural areas.
- Oxygen concentrators provided to all district hospitals.
- E-Office and Sikkim Service portal (SGSP) launched with the aim to create paperless administration for efficient governance and to avoid crowds and gathering of people
- Su-Swastha Yojana- a cashless scheme for government employees for qualitative healthcare service in empanelled hospitals across the country, which covers up to Rs. 10 lakh for the employee as well as their dependent family members by paying a nominal premium.
- Smart Tvs for students from classes 8 to 11 to encourage and assist them with their online classes during the pandemic.

Shri Prem Singh Tamang (Golay)
Hon'ble Chief Minister of Sikkim

Sikkim...
Where Nature Smiles

Sikkim Where Nature Smiles

Gurudongmar Lake : Situated at a height of 17,800 feet it is considered as one of the most sacred lakes by the Buddhists and Hindus alike. The beautiful and awe inspiring lake (190 kms from Gangtok) remains milky in colour throughout the year. According to legend, since the lake remained frozen most of the year, it was not possible to use its water for drinking purposes. When Guru Padmasambhava passed by, while returning from Tibet, the local residents are reported to have approached him to provide a source of water. The Guru obliged. A portion of the lake touched by him does not freeze in extreme winter. The lake is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the State. Foreign Tourists are not allowed to visit the lake.

Temi Tea Garden : The one and only tea estate in the State produces one of the top quality teas for the International Market. The garden was established in the year 1969 and covers an area of 177 hectares (440 acres). The garden is laid over a gentle hill slope and commands a panoramic view of the Mt. Khangchendzonga. The tea produced in this garden is marketed under the name **Temi Tea**. Tourists can visit the factory to know about tea processing methods. There are cafeterias for refreshment and tea tasting. The garden boasts of the Cherry Resort for a stay amidst the lush green tea gardens.

Yumthang Valley :
Situated at a height of 11,800 feet is popularly known as the Valley of Flowers. Located at a distance of 148 kms from Gangtok, it is a paradise for nature lovers with a fascinating blend of flora, fauna and breathtaking scenic beauty. In spring season, wild flowers such as Primulas and Rhododendrons bathe the landscape in rich colours, making it a tourist hot spot. The Shingba Rhododendron Sanctuary with 24 species bloom from April to May end. A popular hot spring is located nearby. In addition lush green forests abounding in Pine and Silver Fir trees, cascading waterfalls and streams abound. Yumthang is open to both domestic and foreign tourist.

Tsomgo Lake : 38 km from Gangtok and at an altitude of 12,400 ft, the ethereally beautiful Tsomgo lake is a must on the itinerary of every visitor to Sikkim. Tsomgo means source of water in Bhutia language. The lake derives its water from the melting snows of the mountains surrounding the lake. Its legendary beauty varies from season to season. In winter the placid lake remains frozen while in late spring a profusion of flowers bloom to add a riot of colours around the lake. For the tourist a visit to the lake offers a wonderful outing, rides on colourfully decorated yaks and mules, which also have a variety of eating stalls serving snacks and beverages. Tsomgo lake is open for both Indian and foreign nationals, however foreign visitors have to be in a group of two or more and have to apply for a visitors permit through a registered travel agency.

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AHEAD OF HIS TIME

Y.C. DEVESHWAR
(1947-2019)

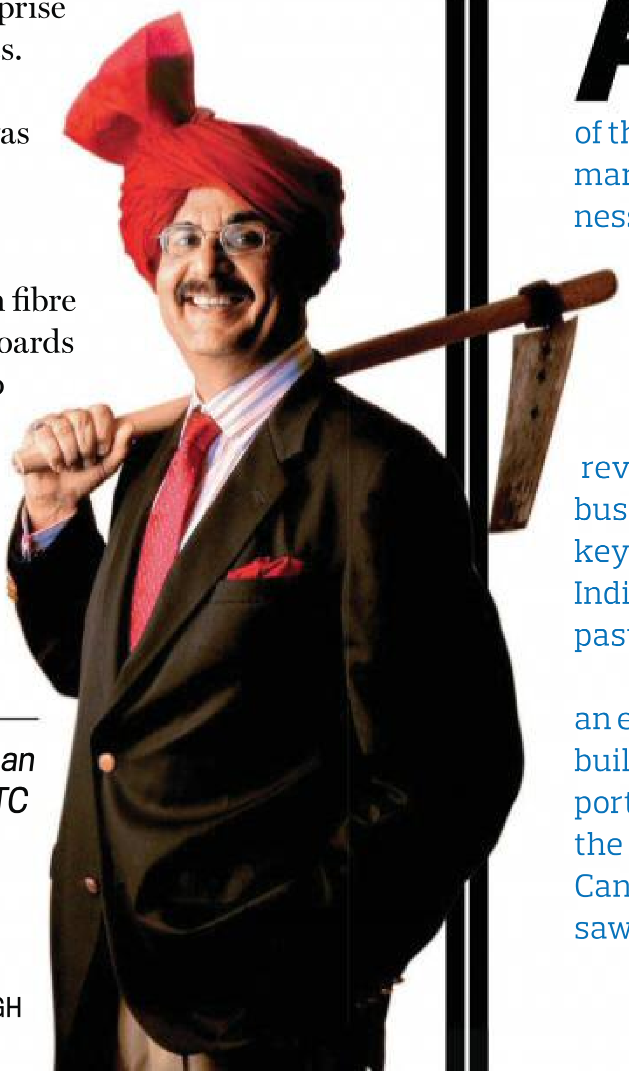
One of India Inc's longest-serving CEOs, Deveshwar transformed ITC from a cigarette maker to a diversified conglomerate

BY SANJIV PURI

A media headline paying tribute to Mr Y.C. Deveshwar called him 'The Man Who Saw Tomorrow'. One such example of prescience, for which he was globally feted on many occasions, was his foreseeing the need to make sustainability the bedrock of corporate strategy. He often said that business cannot succeed in societies that fail, and if future generations were to be secure, transformative economic models were required to tackle social inequalities, environmental devastation and the threat of climate change. It is with this belief that ITC fashioned business models that created economic, environmental and social capital as a unified strategy, making it an exemplar in triple bottom line performance.

Underlying this was his patriotic fervour, which led to a commitment to shape ITC into an Indian enterprise serving national priorities. An example is the large-scale afforestation that was undertaken to replenish environmental resources and generate livelihoods while ensuring long-term fibre security for ITC's paperboards business. Deveshwar also championed the need to nurture world-class Indian brands. It was indeed a privilege to work together with such an extraordinary and visionary leader. ■

Sanjiv Puri *is chairman and managing director, ITC*


BANDEEP SINGH

BANDEEP SINGH

Empire Builder

KUMAR MANGALAM BIRLA, 54

Taking charge of the Aditya Birla Group at the age of 28, K.M. Birla transformed the group into a global business empire

BY RAM CHARAN

A nation is built by its leaders. I had the opportunity to observe one of the best, K.M. Birla, over many years. His willingness to go where others dare not makes him a pathbreaker. He took the Aditya Birla Group from $2 billion to over $45 billion in revenue, and the group's businesses have been key to the evolution of the Indian economy over the past several decades.

Mr Birla stands out as an exceptional business builder. In 2007, an opportunity arose to bid for the downstream assets of Canadian firm Novelis. He saw it as an opportunity to expand the group's global footprint. That decision changed the group's profile and put Hindalco, the group's non-ferrous metals subsidiary, on a verticalisation trajectory.

One thing you cannot learn about pathbreakers without working with them is how they treat people. In talent reviews, he asks laser-sharp questions, but always in a tone that puts people at ease. He also cares for social progress, taking leadership roles at SEBI, at BITS Pilani and at IIM-Ahmedabad. Leaders like Kumar build the future of India. ■

Ram Charan *is a business consultant and author*

THE TRAIL BLAZER

NAMAS BHOJANI

AZIM PREMJI, 76

The former chairman of Wipro, Azim Premji led the firm to become a global leader in the IT sector

BY ASHOK SOOTA

The first path-breaking achievement for which Azim Premji will be remembered is the transformation of a vegetable oil company into a consumer goods behemoth. He is also celebrated for the creation of India's largest computer company and India's second largest software company—albeit a ranking which has been difficult to sustain. The innovations of Wipro's computer business included the launch of the world's first Multibus II computer, based on the Intel 286 chip, as well as the launch of the Wipro Supergenius personal computer which became India's largest selling PC.

Premji's software foray charted a path for Indian IT companies to enter the engineering software sector. Though it was a late entrant into the software sector as a whole, Wipro led the verticalisation of the industry and the entry of Indian IT firms into the infrastructure support segment.

Azim Premji's leadership style was to select leaders he trusted and allow them to take their own decisions. He spent many hours with his leaders, probing their confidence in their decisions and contributing towards a value proposition which would succeed. In my 15 years of leading Wipro's IT businesses, he never overruled even one of my decisions. Azim Premji is frequently accused of micromanagement. I believe those who make such statements are confusing micromanagement for attention to detail and enormous value addition. ■

__Ashok Soota__ is executive chairman, Happiest Minds Technologies

FIRST MOVER

SUNIL BHARTI MITTAL, 63

The founder and chairperson of Bharti Enterprises began his business life in his teens. Today, his telecom firm, Bharti Airtel, is among the largest in the world

BY DR PAWAN MUNJAL

BANDEEP SINGH

Growing up in Ludhiana during the 1960s as close family friends, Sunil and I have known each other from being boys to growing into men. We have decades of history together.

Starting off as a manufacturer of bicycle parts while still in his teens, Sunil has been associated with us as a business partner, supplying components for our family's cycle business in Ludhiana. He shared a very close bond with my father Dr Brijmohan Lall, who always treated him like a son.

One of the smartest first-generation entrepreneurs I have had the pleasure of knowing, Sunil has been the pioneer of the Indian telecom industry. When mobile telephony came to India in the mid-1990s, it was a very bold and courageous decision by Sunil to enter the unknown sector.

It is, therefore, a testimony to Sunil's vision that Airtel rapidly grew to become one of the leading telecom companies in the world today, with acquisitions and partnerships in Africa and many other parts of the world.

> **Sunil is one of the smartest first-generation entrepreneurs and a pioneer of the telecom industry**

Both of us being Ludhiana boys, Sunil and I share some business traits such as our enterprising spirit and marketing acumen. We have some special memories of time spent together at the World Economic Forum in Davos and at innumerable other industry conclaves.

I am truly honoured to be recognising Sunil as part of this special edition. I wish him continued success in all his business ventures and philanthropic initiatives in the years to come. ■

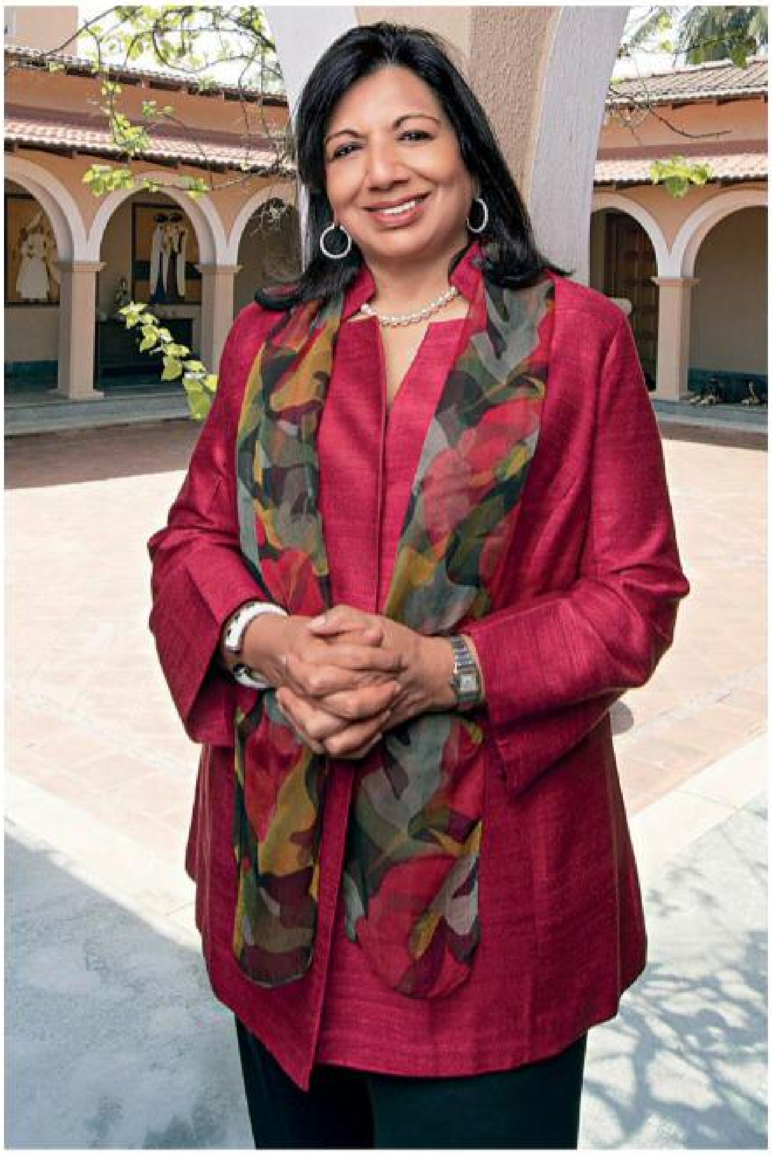
***Dr Pawan Munjal** is chairman and CEO of Hero MotoCorp*

Role Model

KIRAN MAZUMDAR-SHAW, 68

India's first female entrepreneur in biotech, whose work put India on the global map

BY T.V. MOHANDAS PAI


VIVAN MEHRA

Societies develop because of the extraordinary achievements of extraordinary people. Kiran Mazumdar Shaw is one such person. Nearly 40 years ago, she started on her dream—to build a world-class biotech firm in India. She succeeded, becoming a role model for all entrepreneurs. Her focus on quality research and good governance and her perseverance set her apart.

Kiran is also committed to improving the lives of her fellow citizens—this is visible in her philanthropic contributions and her championing of social causes. She also speaks her mind—in a constructive way—on matters of policy and social concerns. She bonds easily with both everyday citizens and political leaders, with people seeing in her a very honest, upright person devoted to the betterment of society. Globally too, she has been recognised for her outstanding achievements. ■

T.V. Mohandas Pai *is chairman, Aarin Capital Partners*

RACHIT GOSWAMI

Mr Bankable

DEEPAK PAREKH, 76

The chairman of HDFC, Deepak Parekh was instrumental in growing it into a world-class financial conglomerate

BY HEMENDRA KOTHARI

In a class by himself, Deepak Parekh and I have been buddies since our teens—we attended the same college and shared a passion for sports. A true friend, his affability and genuineness stood out even in those early years. Fast forward to 1978, when he gave up a plum job at Chase Manhattan to join his legendary Uncle Hasmukhbhai Parekh's start-up, HDFC—certainly a path less trodden at the time. From then on, his foresight, clarity of thought, focus and keen business acumen propelled the company to grow into the world-class giant it is today.

A visionary with a heart and soul, Deepak has a great understanding of people. He has picked the best in the industry to lead the group's businesses. His uncompromised integrity and conviction to do everything correctly make him the go-to person, be it for mentoring, counsel or crisis solving. What never fails to amaze me is Deepak's sharp memory—he can remember incidents from way, way back, including meetings (in great detail), and the names of countless people across all ages! On the personal front, I have seen Deepak most relaxed when he is in the company of old friends. His lively personality is at its best and adds life to all the get-togethers. A treasure on all counts, Deepak must never retire—actually, I'm sure he never will! ■

Hemendra Kothari is chairman, DSP Investment Managers

UNIQUE IDEATOR

NANDAN NILEKANI, 66

Co-founder of Infosys, Nandan Nilekani also oversaw the development of Aadhaar, which made it possible to address the monumental challenge of delivering government benefits to over a billion Indians

BY KIRAN MAZUMDAR-SHAW

HEMANT CHAWLA

I share a special bond with Nandan Nilekani as both of us are first generation start-up entrepreneurs who built high-technology enterprises in an under-resourced and highly regulated business environment in the 1980s. Both of us are driven by a very patriotic sense of purpose and a strong desire to achieve global leadership in whatever we do. This shared ethos has built a strong foundation for a lasting friendship that has stood the test of time.

I admire Nandan for his amazing clarity of thought and vision. He has a deeply analytical mind, which can look at complex problems and address them through simple yet highly effective solutions. This approach led him to build a disruptive technology platform like Aadhaar, which provides a simple yet fundamentally transformational tool to address the monumental challenge of delivering benefits and services equitably, transparently and fairly to every Indian citizen. Today, over 1.26 billion Indians have Aadhaar cards, making it easily the world's largest government-linked unique identification program. Today, Aadhaar is also the backbone for other tech platforms that aim to provide affordable financial services, education and healthcare in a massive developing country like ours.

Through his philanthropic efforts and his technological innovations, Nandan has articulated a clear vision for what he believes India should be—a transparent, efficient and economically inclusive nation. ■

> **Nilekani can look at complex problems and address them through simple yet effective solutions**

***Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw** is executive chairperson, Biocon and Biocon Biologics*

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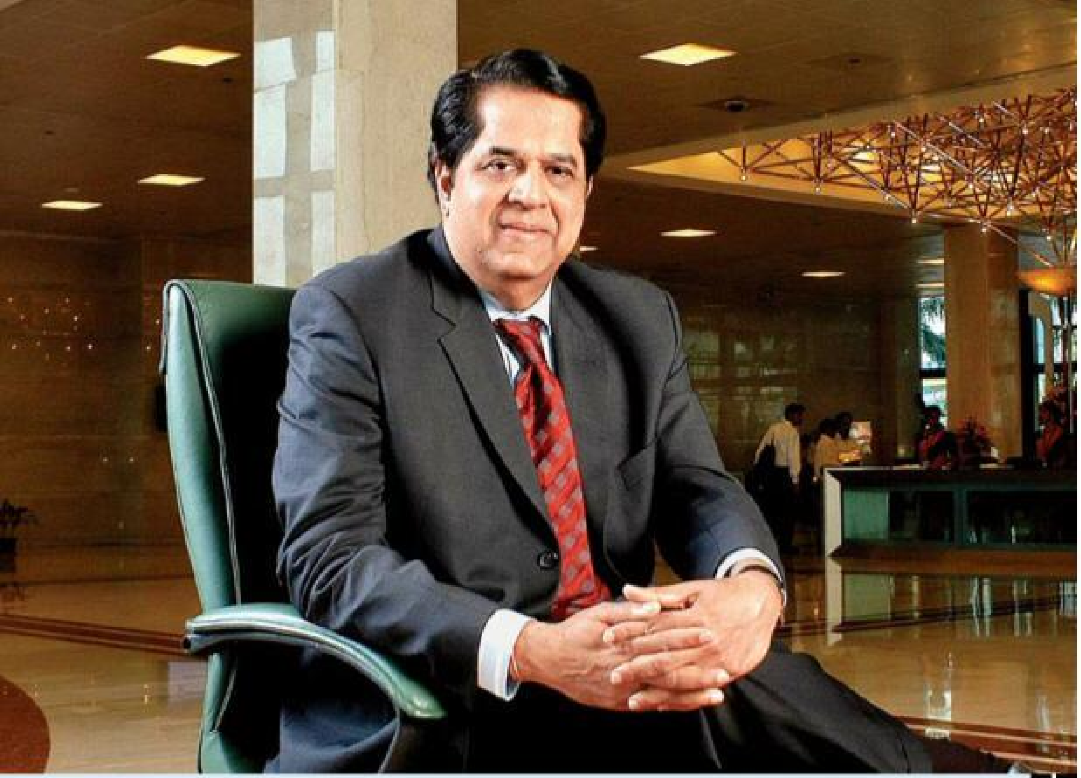


UMESH GOSWAMI

Financial Powerhouse

K.V. KAMATH, 73

One of India's most respected bankers, Kamath has served as chairman of both Infosys and ICICI Bank, and transformed the latter into a financial behemoth

BY UDAY KOTAK

I had the privilege of getting to know Mr K.V. Kamath in the late 90s, when he had just returned from the Asian Development Bank. I learnt from him a very different perspective on finance. He was focused on growth, intent on making a paradigm shift in the Indian financial sector. Under his leadership, one of the game changing events was the merger of ICICI with ICICI Bank.

Mr Kamath's boldness in capital markets was evident when he went ahead and completed one of the largest capital raising issuances then by an Indian company in the ADR (American Depositary Receipt) market in 2004-05. In the early 2000s, he spearheaded ICICI Bank's foray into consumer finance and consumer banking. His transformative and aggressive approach in finance was combined with a phenomenal ability to create leaders.

I have had multiple occasions to spend time with him over the years. I still recollect a meeting I had with him in Davos at the peak of the global financial crisis in January 2009. When things were looking bleak indeed, Mr Kamath's approach was one of positivity. I look up to him as a source of inspiration and one of the select men who have helped transform India's financial sector—both corporate and consumer—as we know it today. I look forward to continuing path-breaking contributions by Vaman (as I take the liberty of calling him now) to India's future. ■

__Uday Kotak__ is managing director and CEO, Kotak Mahindra Bank

MEDICAL INC.

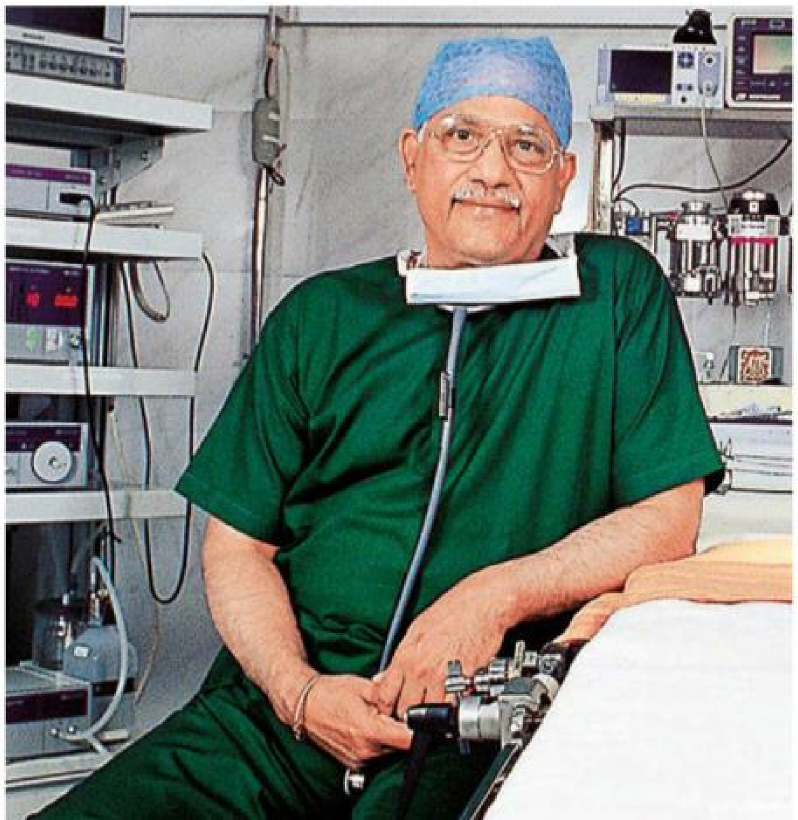
PRATHAP C. REDDY, 88

The founder of India's first corporate hospital chain, he brought world-class healthcare to the country

BY DR DEVI SHETTY

Many Indians will attest to how fundamentally India's healthcare has improved in recent years. Indians once travelled abroad for treatment; today, patients from across the globe travel to India. Today, it is much easier for hospitals to be established than it was a few decades ago, and it is also much easier for citizens to claim tax exemptions on health insurance premiums. Many of these changes can be traced back to the efforts of one man—Dr Prathap Chandra Reddy. Forty years ago, there were many roadblocks to quality healthcare in India—regulatory, legal, geographic and economic. For example, medical equipment was taxed on par with luxury goods, with an import duty of 375 per cent. In this backdrop, it was a real crusade for Dr Reddy to find ways to surmount the hurdles to establishing the Apollo Group of Hospitals, a leader in Indian healthcare and one of the top healthcare groups in Asia. At a time when hospitals were nowhere in contention to be listed on stock exchanges, Dr Reddy's relentless perseverance in bringing about policy reforms was commendable. And even as Apollo Hospitals went public, Dr Reddy was clear in his vision of serving patients rather than generating returns for shareholders. ■

__Dr Devi Shetty__ is chairman and executive director, Narayana Health



RAVI SHANKAR

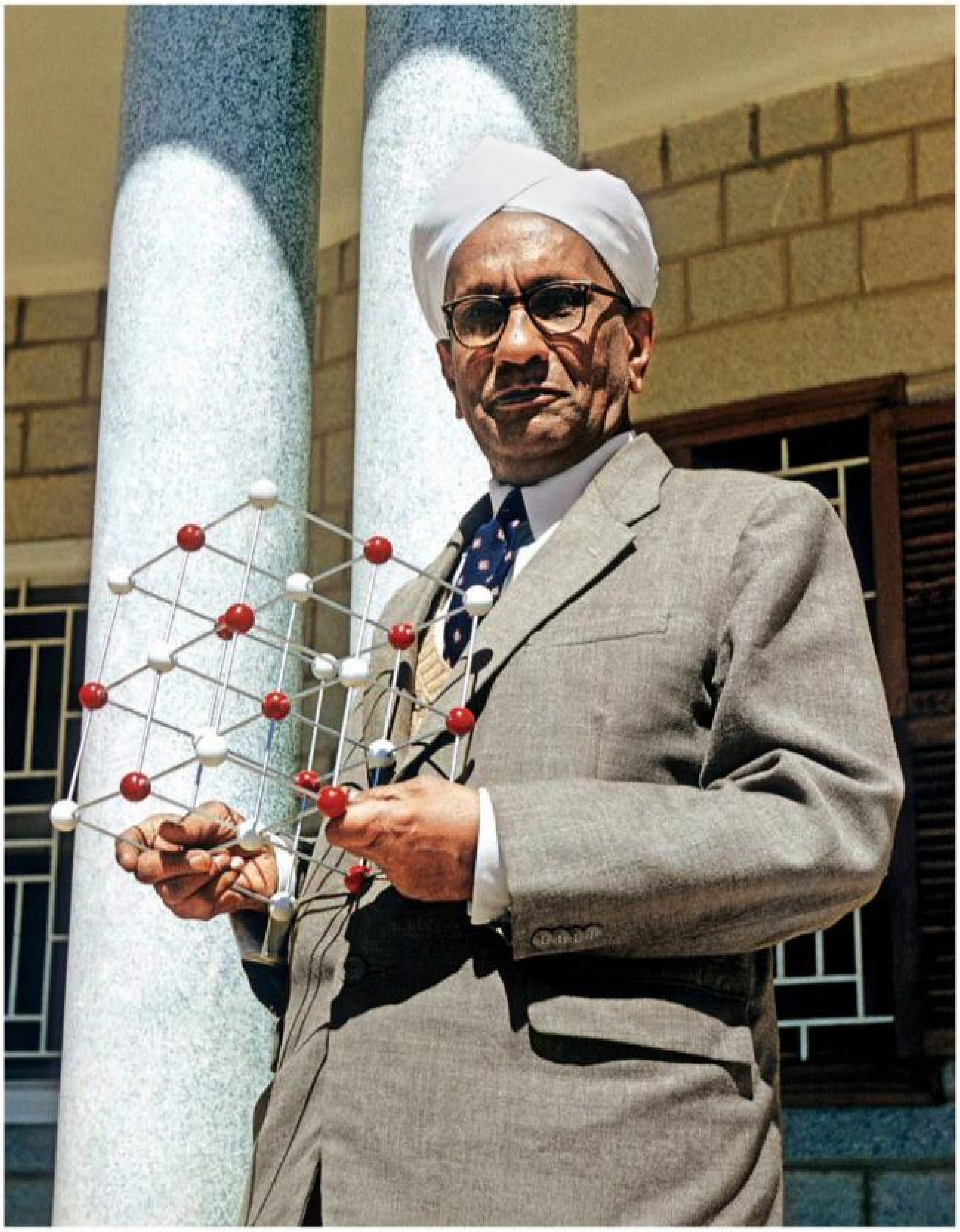
GLOBAL BEACON

C.V. RAMAN

(1888-1970)

His groundbreaking discovery on the scattering of light, the Raman Effect, inspired a league of scientists at home

BY SANDIP TRIVEDI



ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman, one of Indian's greatest scientists, is best known for his pathbreaking discovery, along with student K.S. Krishnan, of the Raman Effect. For this, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1930. Usually when light scatters, through a process called Rayleigh scattering, it changes direction but not its energy. This happens, for example, when light scatters from dust in the atmosphere, leading to the sky being blue. Raman and Krishnan found a new method of scattering in which light changes both its direction and energy; a change in energy means light also changes its wavelength. The Raman Effect has proved extremely important in science. It's an important tool that allows one to characterise and identify different types of molecules.

Raman's great discoveries and the confidence he brought to our country and its culture were a tremendous inspiration to scientists in independent India. At a time when India's contributions were being systematically undermined, Raman showed how Indian musical instruments were among the most scientifically advanced in the world; for example, Indian drums, such as the tabla, have a definite tone because of the varying density along their vibrating surface.

He shaped institutions in significant ways by his presence and contribution. After working at the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science, he was appointed the Palit Professor of Physics at Calcutta University in 1917. He joined the Indian Institute of Science in 1933, went on to become its first Indian director, and founded the Raman Research Institute in 1948, which continues to be one of the leading scientific research laboratories in the country. ■

> **C.V. Raman shaped institutions in significant ways by his presence and contribution**

Sandip Trivedi *is a theoretical physicist and former director, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai*

ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Architect of the Atomic Dream

HOMI JEHANGIR BHABHA (1909-1966)

Father of the nuclear programme, he planned N-reactors at a time India wasn't even making indigenously designed bicycles

BY DR R. CHIDAMBARAM

Arthur Koestler talks of two kinds of leaders, 'The Yogi' and 'The Commissar'. The Yogi is the 'contemplative thinker' and Commissar the 'man of action'. Dr Homi Jehangir Bhabha was a unique mix of both. It was also a fortunate circumstance that Bhabha and prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru shared an exceptional bond—Bhabha addressed Nehru as '*Bhai*'. Bhabha was a renowned theoretical high energy physicist at Cambridge before joining the faculty of the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), and had done pioneering work on electron-positron scattering—known as 'Bhabha Scattering'—and cosmic ray showers.

With help from the Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, Bhabha set up the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research in 1945, planning to make it the fountainhead of the nuclear establishment, now named after him as the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre. While doing my PhD at IISc, I was inspired by Bhabha's vision and confidence (in himself and his countrymen) to build nuclear reactors in India at a time we weren't even making indigenously designed bicycles.

Apart from setting up the Atomic Energy Commission, Bhabha also nucleated space activity at the Department of Atomic Energy. The UN nominated Bhabha as the president of the first Geneva Conference on the peaceful uses of atomic energy in 1955. He was also a founder member of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna; incidentally, he had argued for Vienna as the IAEA headquarters over Geneva because of his love for opera music! Bhabha created a leadership swarm around him, and that is why, even after the country lost this great scientific leader at the age of 56, in an air crash in 1966, the atomic energy programme has continued to flourish. ■

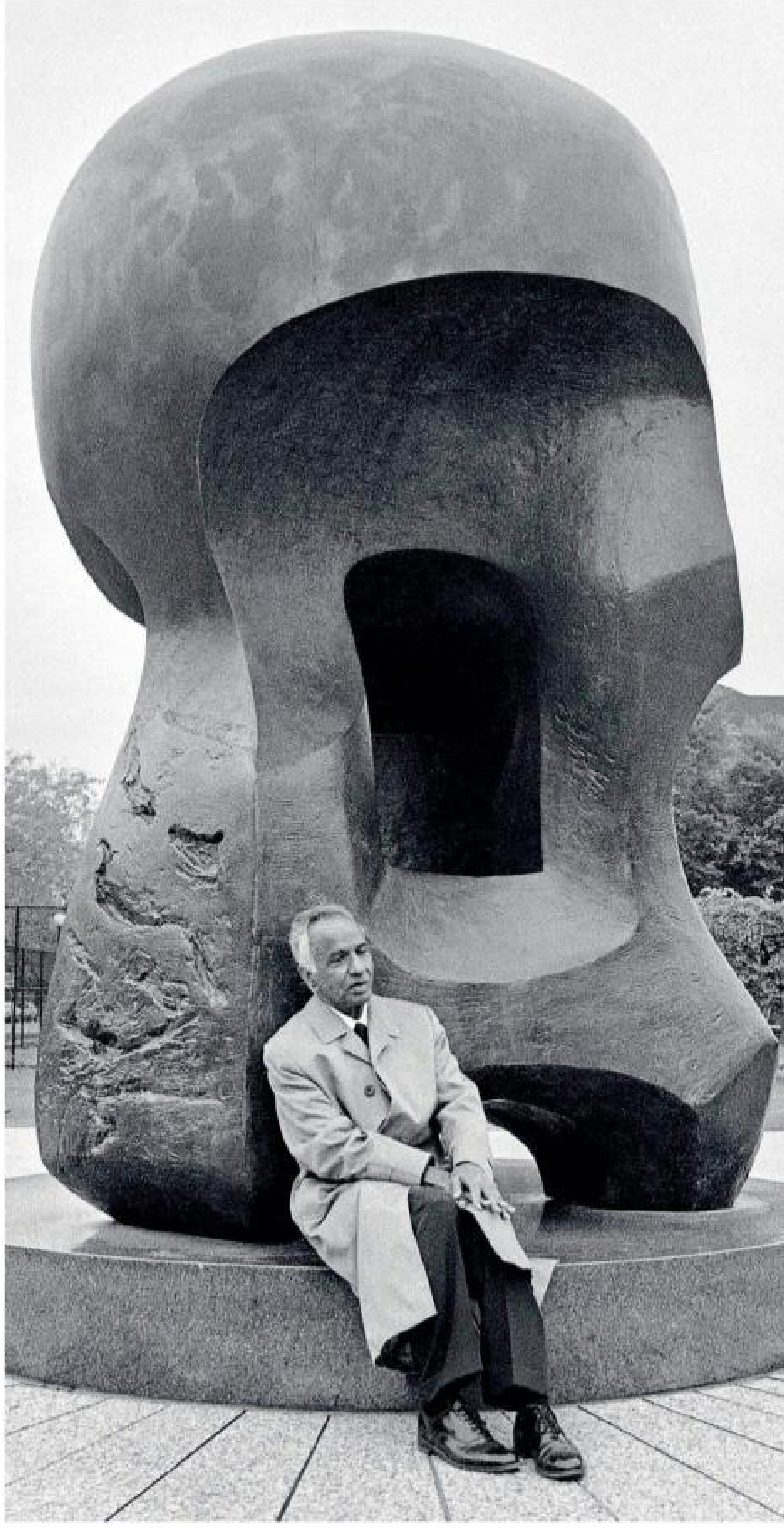
Dr R. Chidambaram *is former chairman, Atomic Energy Commission, and currently DAE Homi Bhabha Chair Professor at BARC*

COSMIC GENIUS

SUBRAHMANYAN CHANDRASEKHAR (1910-1995)

The Lahore-born scientist came up with the theory explaining the death of the Universe's most massive stars

BY JAYANT V. NARLIKAR



GETTY IMAGES

In the mid-1930s, a student from India completed longstanding work on 'white dwarfs'—very faint stars that have density equal to at least a million times that of water. What's the physics behind such stars? Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar (Chandra) got his PhD for this work from Cambridge, where he was a Trinity College fellow. Because of its perceived importance, UK's Royal Astronomical Society invited Chandra to make a presentation. He expected a pat on the back from the distinguished gathering, but the opposite happened. Arthur Stanley Eddington, also a Trinity fellow, subjected his theory to severe criticism.

Chandra's finding was that a white dwarf star cannot have mass more than 1.4 times the mass of the Sun. So, after spending all its nuclear fuel in shining, it would cease to maintain internal equilibrium. Eddington asked what would happen to stars more massive than that limit. Chandra's theory was that such a star would shrink until it became so dense that light from it would be trapped in its gravity. "This is an absurd situation and nature wouldn't allow it," Eddington remarked.

> **Chandrasekhar's followers were no match for his analytical techniques**

Eddington was an experienced stellar physicist and his argument carried the day. Chandra was dejected. Time, the great healer, eventually proved he was right. The mass limit of 1.4 solar masses is now known as the 'Chandrasekhar Limit'. Chandra was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1983. He certainly was a pathbreaker on dense matter stars. His followers couldn't match his analytical and mathematical techniques. But post-1970, theoretical work was shifting to computers. Bigger and faster computers delivered a richer set of solutions. Chandra once confessed to me his regrets at this trend. Although he continued working abroad, his example inspired generations of Indians endeavouring in astrophysics. ■

Jayant Vishnu Narlikar *is an astrophysicist and emeritus professor at the Inter University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics, Pune*

Institutional Icon

SHANTI SWARUP BHATNAGAR

(1894-1955)

The science administrator was the force behind the chain of industrial research-oriented national labs

BY R.A. MASHELKAR

Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar was a luminary—a clairvoyant, noted chemist, outstanding academician and astute science administrator. Most Indians revere him as the moving spirit behind establishing the chain of national laboratories in India, even before the country's independence, and then steering them as the first director general of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). Less known is the key role he played as the first chairman of the University Grants Commission as also the secretary for a ministry involved in 'natural resources', apart from his contribution towards starting India's atomic energy programme.

Bhatnagar advocated skill development and gradual Indianisation through institution-building, but he also accepted foreigners in leadership positions. He taught us many lessons, but for me the biggest were that science must make economic sense, and also that one can do both: play a leading role in science administration as well as excel in one's own research in basic sciences. Bhatnagar was a key player in the prolonged 'post-colonial' transition, which stretched well into the 1950s. C. Rajagopalachari, in his address at the inauguration of the National Chemical Laboratory, described him as a 'live wire'. Then, Nehru remarked jocularly that he too had received a "shock" at the inauguration of the National Physical Laboratory. Indian science and technology owes much to what was termed by Sir C.V. Raman as the 'Nehru Bhatnagar Effect'. ■

R.A. Mashelkar *is an eminent scientist and former DG, CSIR*

THE INNOVATOR

VIKRAM SARABHAI
(1919-1971)

The visionary institution builder laid the foundation for India's space efforts

BY K. KASTURIRANGAN

When I was exploring doing research in astrophysics and astronomy after a master's degree in physics in 1963, I was invited to meet Dr Vikram Sarabhai at the Physical Research Laboratory (PRL) in Ahmedabad. Founded by Sarabhai, PRL became the cradle of the Indian space programme. I was struck by his courage, conviction, vision and persuasive powers. It all had a decisive influence on me and saw me do my PhD at PRL, followed by my induction into the space programme that Sarabhai had brilliantly envisioned. His initiatives included defining India's first satellite launch vehicle and setting up the infrastructure for satellite communication.

Once, an instrument we were to fly to measure electromagnetic radiation malfunctioned. Sarabhai asked us to fix it, and when we did, he congratulated us, saying: "I am glad you solved the problem, but more important is the insights you have gained. In life, there is a very thin demarcation between failure and success, and you will always learn more from failure." He then jocularly added, "When is the party?" We had a hearty laugh.

Born into a family of prominence and wealth and equipped with a doctorate in cosmic rays from Cambridge, Sarabhai was multifariously talented. He set up the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad. As chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, he made some seminal contributions. He was an outstanding visionary who promoted contemporary technologies and created innovative institutions for national development. ■

Dr K. Kasturirangan *is former chairman, ISRO*

ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

SHAILESH RAVAL

COOPERATIVE SPIRIT

VERGHESE KURIEN (1921-2012)

The 'Milkman of India'. His cooperative movement ended the dairy drought and spurred a socioeconomic revolution

BY R.S. SODHI

The Nuclear Maestro

RAJA RAMANNA
(1925-2004)

The man behind 'Smiling Buddha', the country's first nuclear test

BY DR ANIL KAKODKAR

If I have to name one individual who has influenced me the most, it is Dr Raja Ramanna. I am basically a mechanical engineer, so discipline-wise there was not much in common between me and the eminent physicist. Even so, Dr Ramanna always seemed to care about me right since my young days at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC). Many of my colleagues from that time felt the same way about

The Amul movement he nurtured made India *atmanirbhar* in the dairy sector

Fondly remembered as the 'Milkman of India' and the 'Father of the White Revolution', Dr Verghese Kurien was a doyen of the dairy cooperative movement. He was a great institution builder who ushered in a socioeconomic revolution among rural farmers. His mission was to turn around the fortunes of the underprivileged and change the destiny of his motherland.

The Amul cooperative movement Dr Kurien nurtured has helped the country become *atmanirbhar* in the dairy sector. In 1973, India used to produce only 23 million metric tonnes (MMT) of milk in a year. We were highly dependent on imports. Dr Kurien replicated the Amul model across the country through Operation Flood. Today, India is the largest milk producer in the world—198 MMT of milk a year. We export dairy products around the globe.

Dr Kurien demonstrated how dairy cooperatives can harness the collective strength of millions of small and marginal farmers and do away with the need to import dairy commodities. Operation Flood helped double farmers' income. A shining example of Make in India.

This year marks two milestones—the 75th anniversary of the Amul movement and the birth centenary of Dr Kurien. The Calicut-born Dr Kurien had arrived in Gujarat's Anand town in May 1949. Here he found his calling and spent the next six decades. He built the Amul movement on the values of integrity, courage, dedication and commitment towards both farmers and consumers.

Amul is now the largest food organisation in India, with an annual group turnover of Rs 53,000 crore in 2020-21. It has 87 dairy manufacturing plants with a total milk handling capacity of 39 million litres a day. Some 3.6 million farmer families, across 18,563 village-level dairy cooperative societies and 18 district-level milk producer cooperative unions, of Gujarat are part of the Amul family. All thanks to Dr Kurien. ■

Dr R.S. Sodhi *is managing director, Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation (Amul)*

BHAWAN SINGH

him. Whether in the early shaping of research and human resources development at the Department of Atomic Energy, preparing for India's nuclear science programme or realising 'Smiling Buddha' (India's first nuclear test) in 1974, he was a true pathbreaker. Even for the nuclear power programme, it was he who raised the bar to 10,000 MWe.

One day, he told me to come with him on a tour of Cairo, Vienna and Warsaw. Separate teams were to accompany him to Cairo and Warsaw. He was to attend a senior-level meeting at Vienna in between. Unclear about my role, I asked him, "What do you want me to do?" "Nothing, just come" was the reply. During the trip, I understood the many dimensions of atomic energy, much beyond what I would have comprehended otherwise. That was Dr Ramanna, the mentor. He could unfold the logic as well as the illogic of things. He was himself the 'Smiling Buddha'. ■

Dr Anil Kakodkar *is former chairman, Atomic Energy Commission, and now AICTE distinguished chair professor and chairman, Rajiv Gandhi Science and Technology Commission*

GRAIN GURU

M.S. SWAMINATHAN, 96

His Green Revolution ushered in self-reliance in foodgrains through high-yielding varieties of wheat

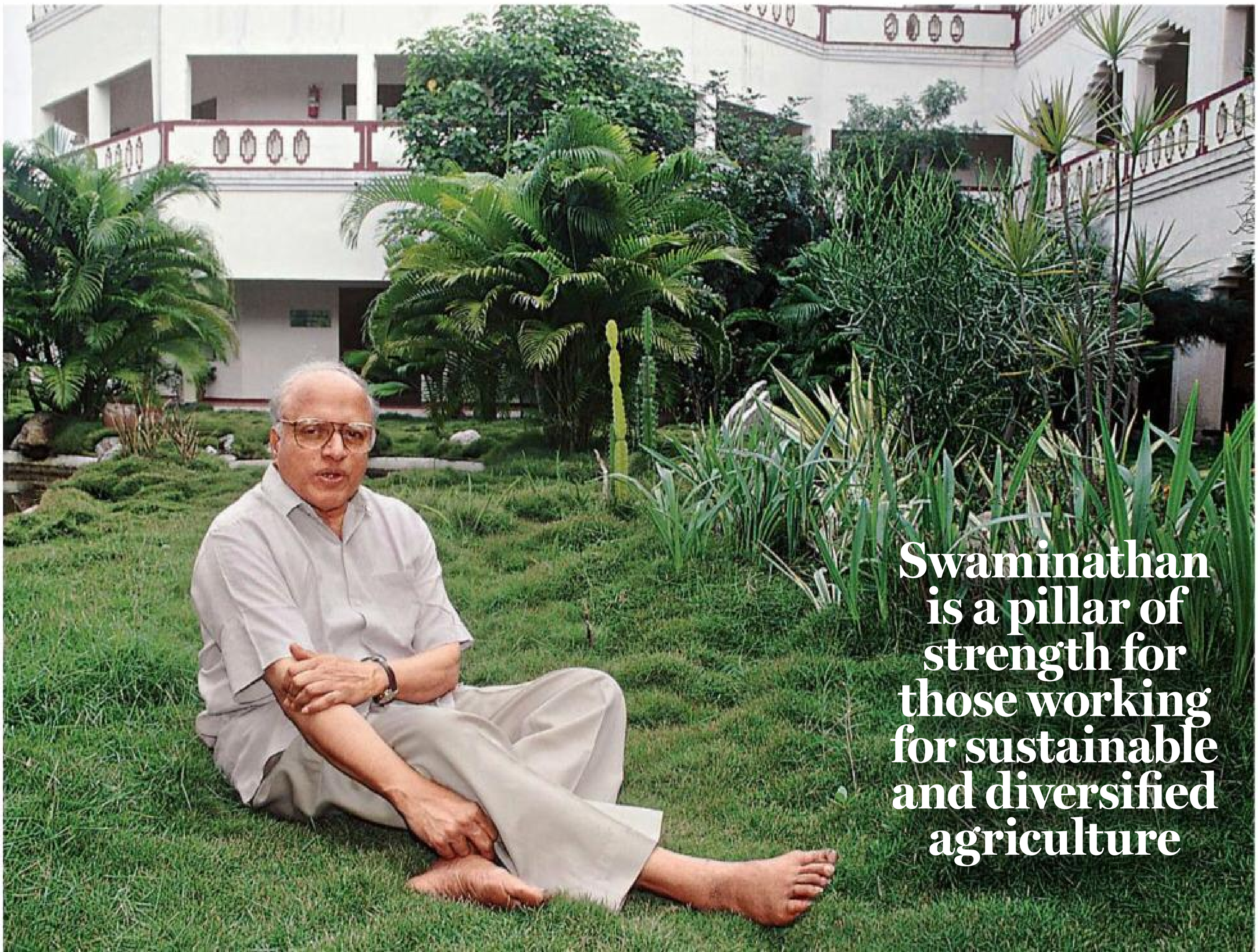
BY YOGINDER K. ALAGH

The world sees M.S. Swaminathan—we fondly called him 'MSS'—as the architect of India's Green Revolution, as the man who made the country self-reliant in foodgrains. Swaminathan was as aware of the requirements of farmers as the genomes of seeds. His ability to understand the complexities at the farm makes him stand out among his peers and gives his work that exceptional touch.

In the mid-sixties, India had faced back-to-back droughts, and motivating farmers to take another crop was a challenge. Globally, agricultural economists were running down India's efforts to grow enough grains to feed her people. Picked by the government for the task of gathering empirical data and feedback on crop patterns and yields, I had written to all district collectors to share such information. I had never dealt with agriculture before, so having Swaminathan's guidance gave me confidence. The extensive exercise to gather district-wise data helped us understand the efforts needed to focus the Green Revolution on districts showing good agricultural growth. Swaminathan stood behind us throughout the mapping exercise. His insights on the irrigation facilities available and feasibilities came in very handy and helped us zero in on Punjab and Haryana.

Swaminathan, though, was convinced that the model for Punjab and Haryana couldn't be replicated everywhere. He felt other parts of the country required different cropping patterns and models. Later, it was his vision that helped create a network of self-help groups (SHGs) in the country, opened the doors for participation of corporates and encouraged crop diversification. To me and others working for sustainable and diversified agriculture, MSS remains a pillar of strength. ■

Yoginder K. Alagh *is a noted economist and former Union minister*


HK RAJASHEKAR

Swaminathan is a pillar of strength for those working for sustainable and diversified agriculture

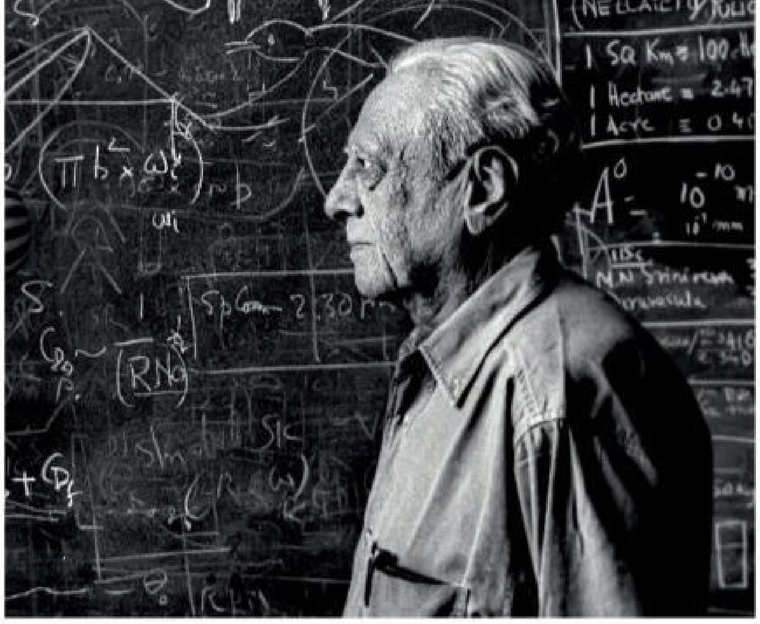
The Transformer

SATISH DHAWAN

(1920-2002)

The pioneering aerospace scientist and engineer steered the space mission through the key implementation stages

BY V. SIDDHARTHA



BANDEEP SINGH

One of Bharat's *ratnas*, Prof. Satish Dhawan would have cringed at any such hagiographic appellation and given me a thorough dressing down for using it. India's pioneering aerospace scientist and engineer contributed to engineering science in a way that enculturated it anew in our still-colonised minds. He had a full range of professional involvement—teaching, scientific research, technology development, management and leadership—often in more than one of these capacities at a time. As director of the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Dhawan transformed what was a relatively laidback campus of fewer than a dozen departments into a world-class institution with some 40 departments staffed by a young faculty.

In 1972, Dhawan was called upon by then prime minister Indira Gandhi to head India's fledgling space programme. Even as he continued to head IISc, over the next decade, Dhawan built the country's space programme into a model of technology development and application. His unimpeachable integrity and sense of moral order were the bases for his management style at ISRO (Indian Space Research Organisation). His great human qualities, combining personal charm with a deep commitment to social values and extraordinary objectivity, have inspired generations. Dhawan has left a precious legacy for the country's traverse to 'modernity'; one that endows her young with the self-confidence to explore and realise the India of their dreams. ■

Dr V. Siddhartha, *a former emeritus scientist at DRDO, had earlier worked with Dhawan at ISRO. He is currently a senior associate at NIAS*

Superb Expositor

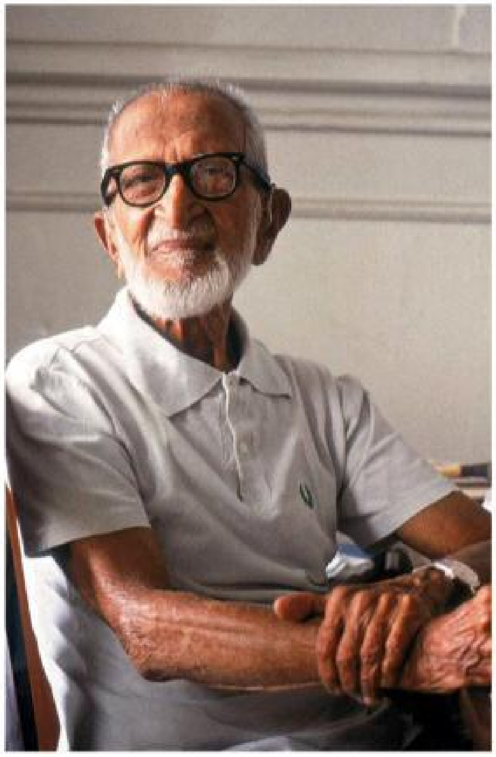
SALIM ALI

(1896-1987)

The legendary ornithologist was one of India's most passionate conservationists

BY MADHAV GADGIL

INDIA TODAY ARCHIVES



I was born the year Salim Ali's superbly illustrated *The Book of Indian Birds* was published. My father was an avid birdwatcher and I learnt identifying birds from pictures before I could read. At 14, I was puzzled by the green bee-eater's missing pin feather. I wrote to Salim Ali and was thrilled when he replied promptly. I met him, was charmed by his knowledge and enthusiasm, and decided to follow in his footsteps. He was 46 years older but treated me as a friend and staunchly supported me.

I accompanied him on many field trips over the next 25 years. It was a treat to watch birds with him, and I had the privilege of co-authoring a scientific paper with him on communal roosting. He was a superb expositor with a sparkling wit, which comes out in his series of bird books. These attracted the urban middle classes to birdwatching and nature conservation. Regretfully, Salim Ali was prejudiced that the common people of India were destructive of nature. That led to the banning of buffaloes from the Bharatpur wetlands, which ended up deteriorating rather than improving it as a water-bird habitat. His prejudice has also nurtured an anti-people conservation movement. But whatever our differences on such issues, I have tremendous respect for this naturalist extraordinary. ■

Madhav Gadgil *is an eminent ecologist and founder of the Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru*

CARL SAGAN THE DEMON-HAUNTED WORLD
The Life Divine

BHAWAN SINGH

THE KARMA YOGI

A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM (1931-2015)

The celebrated aerospace engineer spearheaded the satellite launch vehicle and missile programmes and captured our imagination as a 'People's President'

BY DR V.K. SARASWAT

Dr Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam, my guru, revolutionised the technology roadmap of India. Growing up in modest circumstances in the village of Rameswaram in Tamil Nadu, he imbibed a composite value system from his teachers. This acted as his inner compass during the remarkable journey of his life: from a newspaper boy to the leader of India's space and missile programmes and, finally, the 'People's President' of India.

In the space programme, Dr Kalam was project director of SLV-3, India's first satellite launch vehicle. He succeeded by synergising the efforts of academicians, researchers and industry like never before. He then transformed the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) through his mission-mode approach and strategic vision. Dr Kalam had the exceptional ability to make even the most diverse-thinking individuals work for a common cause. I often joked that he could make the North and South Poles come together!

His eyes were set on building an ICBM (intercontinental ballistic missile) for India. Failure never deterred him and, under his guidance, the Agni missile made its first successful flight in 1989 after two attempts. He owned all failures and credited success to his teammates. When he took over as the president in 2002, many analysts felt he would be a pushover. But, as in his other endeavours, he proved his critics wrong with his single-minded commitment to the Constitution of India. ■

Dr Kalam had the ability to make even the most diverse-thinking people work for a common cause

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Dr V.K. Saraswat *is former scientific advisor to the defence minister and former director general, DRDO. He is now member, NITI Aayog*

Soldier's General

FIELD MARSHAL S.H.F.J. MANEKSHAW (1914-2008)

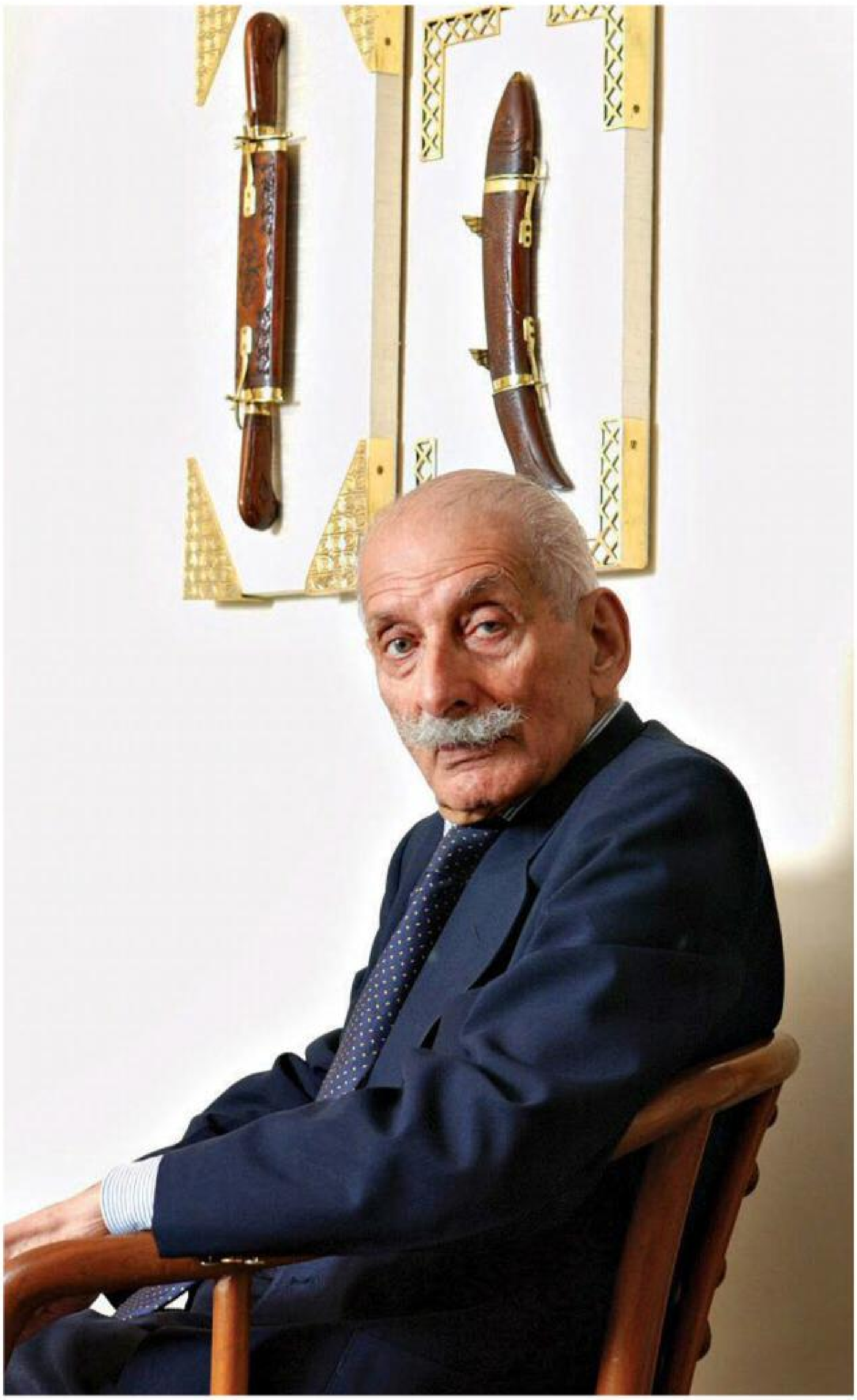
India's tallest military leader to date and chief strategist of the 1971 war victory who set an example with his gold standard of conduct

BY MAJOR GENERAL IAN CARDOZO (RETD)

I first met Field Marshal Sam Hormusji Framji Jamshedji Manekshaw in 1964. He was a lieutenant general then; I was a captain and the Indian Army's first Sena Medal recipient. At the investiture ceremony, I asked him for advice. "Anyone in any profession must do what he loves best...and love what he does," he told me. He also said something that has remained with me—"Do not be afraid." That was Field Marshal Manekshaw, a military leader who lived by his principles irrespective of what people thought. In the 1960s, he had once refused to criticise the army chief when the defence minister asked him to. On taking over as the 4 Corps commander (it had suffered a shock defeat in the 1962 war with China), he made it clear that no further orders for retreat would be given. "I and my soldiers are expendable but my country's reputation isn't," he said.

In April 1971, Field Marshal Manekshaw told then prime minister Indira Gandhi that the army was not ready for war. He then prepared the army and we won our greatest military victory, in East Pakistan, in December 1971. Some attributes made him stand out like a pole star—humility, strong values, determination to do what is right irrespective of the consequences, and being a leader who carried his men along with him because he cared for them. Before the outbreak of the 1971 war, Field Marshal Manekshaw had toured all the formations to pep them up. And finally, when he retired, he shrugged away an offer of a sinecure. To him, nothing else compared to being India's chief of the army staff. ■

Major General Ian Cardozo (retd) *is a decorated veteran of the 1971 war*



BHASKAR PAUL

The Force Multiplier

GENERAL KRISHNASWAMY SUNDARJI (1928-1999)

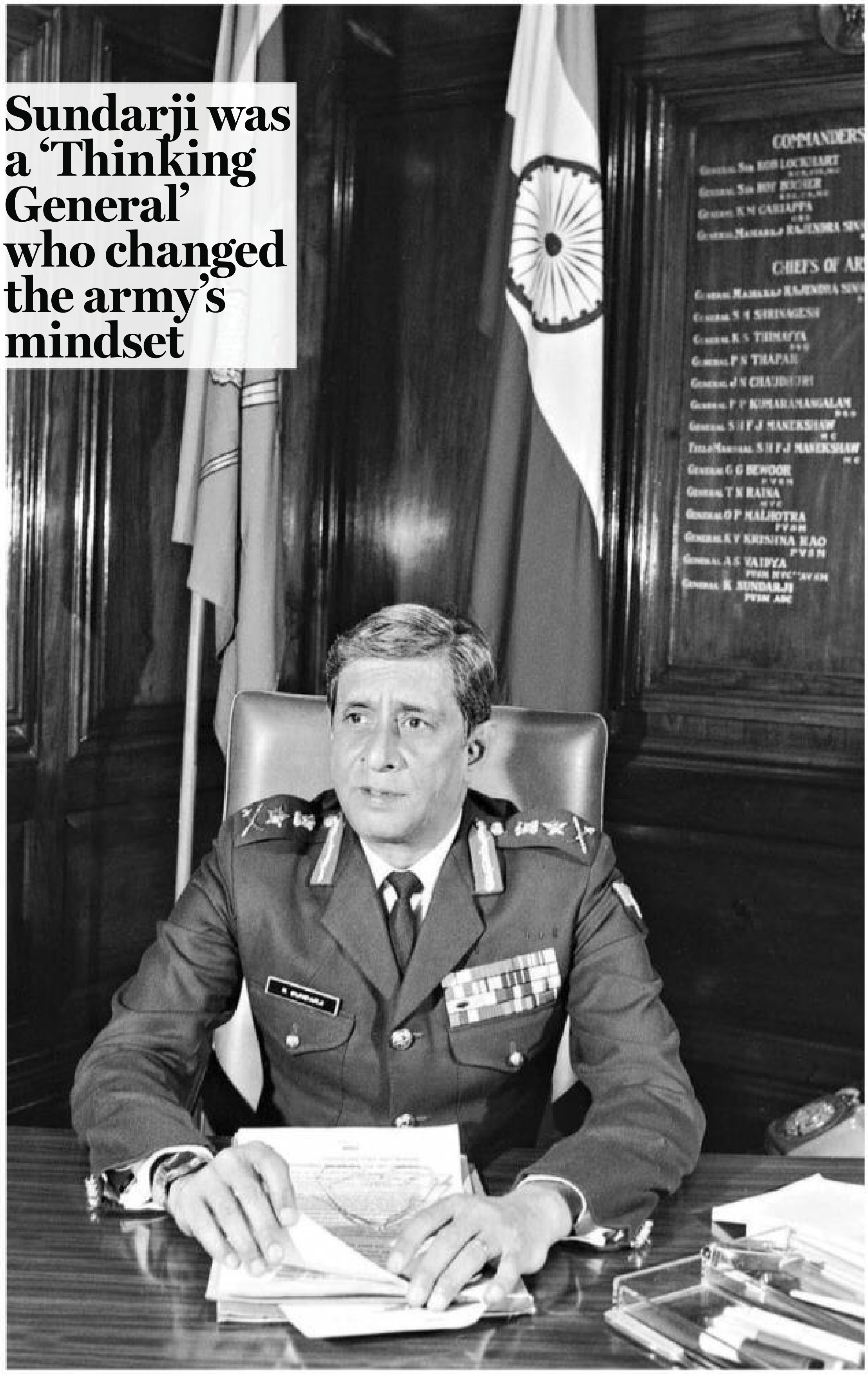
Sundarji rewrote the army's battle ethos and was part of a select group that drafted the early nuclear doctrine

BY LT GENERAL S.S. MEHTA (RETD)

I first met General Krishnaswamy Sundarji in Ambala. I was a major and he was conducting a sand model discussion in the 1 Armoured Division. When he asked for comments, I said the plan being discussed wouldn't work and offered my reasons. His response: "In tactics, there's nothing right or wrong. The real answers will come only in battle." Many officers thought my intervention meant the end of my military career. But to my surprise, I got a call a fortnight later from Sundarji's office asking me to join as his personal staff in the 33 Corps, where he had moved on promotion. Later, I was his military assistant when he became chief of the army staff.

Cast in a soldier's mould in thought, word and deed, General Sundarji had an agile mind, an enquiring nature and a disdain for status quo in military matters, both doctrinal and operational. He had a ready wit and an easy manner. All the changes he initiated as army chief have stood the test of time, such as mechanisation for rapid mobilisation and strikes, army aviation, an independent air defence arm, command and staff stream, complaint advisory board and limited nuclear deterrence. He always spurred the army to think afresh. Ceremonials took a backseat, and operational thinking and delivery came to the forefront. That set in motion a mindset change in the army. General Sundarji was regarded as a 'Thinking General', but he was more than that. To everyone, he was 'Our Chief'. ■

Lt Gen. S.S. Mehta (retd) *is former western army commander*



Sundarji was a 'Thinking General' who changed the army's mindset

BHAWAN SINGH

PA IMAGES VIA GETTY IMAGES

He has inspired generations of athletes. His excellence has no parallel

SETTING THE PACE

MILKHA SINGH (1929-2021)

The 'Flying Sikh' put India on the global athletics scene with his splendid runs

BY P.T. USHA

Milkha Singh remains a legend in the history of Indian sports with his run timings and has inspired not only me but generations of athletes. His excellence has no parallel. I first heard about him on joining the Kannur Sports Division school where my coach, O.M. Nambiar, would talk about Milkha to encourage us to improve our performance.

I first met Milkha Singh while representing India at the world junior invitation athletic meet in Seoul in 1982 and won the gold in 200m and bronze in 100m. Since then, he began monitoring my performance with interest. But I didn't have a great interaction with him back then due to the language barrier. He called me 'PT', and when feeling affectionate '*Beti*'. When I missed a medal by a fraction of a second at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, he advised me to participate in more international events to better my timings.

My ties with Milkha fluctuated. I was pained when he criticised me for not winning a medal at the 1988 Seoul Olympics. Without knowing the reality, he claimed I had cheated my country by underperforming in the race. But the fact was that I was injured and undergoing treatment. I didn't want to participate in the 400m event but was forcefully made part of the team. Later, when Milkha realised what had happened, he apologised.

Milkha was a great warrior and great athlete. In the 1960 Olympics, he clocked 45.6 seconds in the 400m event, missing the bronze by 0.1 seconds. He remains a source of inspiration for me and my family. A gifted soul. ■

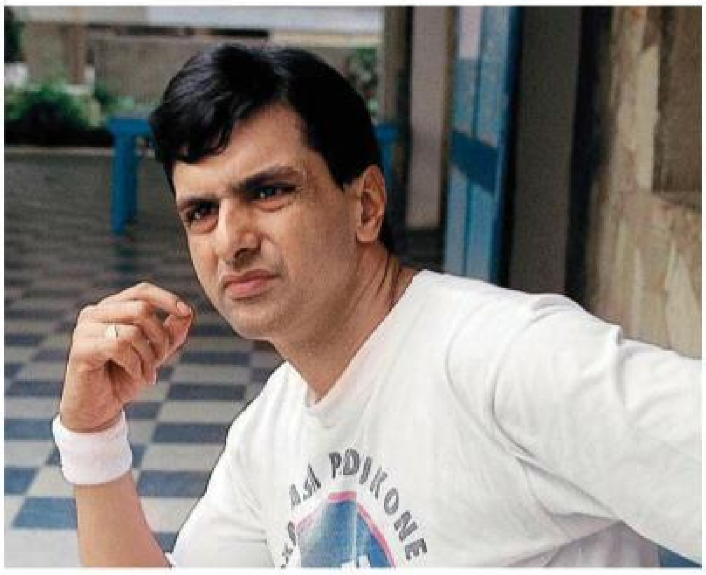
P.T. Usha *is one of India's most distinguished track & field athletes*

CHAMPION SHUTTLER

PRAKASH PADUKONE, 66

The first Indian to win the All England Open, he kick-started the country's badminton revolution

BY PULLELA GOPICHAND



HK RAJASHEKAR

For someone like me raised without thinking of sports as a career, Prakash Sir's presence in the world badminton circuit was huge. Starting out at the Lal Bahadur Stadium in Hyderabad, where there were no national champions, becoming a world-level sportsman seemed like an impossible dream. But thanks to his All England Open win, we thought we could achieve something of that nature.

Prakash Sir has been a role model for me and an inspiration for a whole generation to take to the sport. It would be unfair to say we thought we could emulate him because he was a God-like figure. During his visit to Hyderabad in 1986, I recall collecting his autograph. I still treasure it.

In 1993, I was fortunate to be trained by him at the Canara Union in Malleswaram, Bengaluru. His finesse, deft strokes, deception and movement on court were amazing. Equally enjoyable was his control of the shuttle. I played doubles with him in practice against many of India's top players. We would win many times but, more importantly, it was a great learning experience.

After his career, he has given back to badminton through the Prakash Padukone Academy, conducted tournaments and co-founded the Olympic Gold Quest—initiatives that have taken Indian badminton to where it is today. ■

Pullela Gopichand *is chief national badminton coach*

'Sunny G' has always impressed with his inimitable style, playing ethics and in-depth understanding of the game

ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

75TH INDEPENDENCE DAY SPECIAL

THE COMPLETE MASTER

SUNIL MANOHAR GAVASKAR, 72

The first batsman in the world to score 10,000 runs in Tests redefined style and technique in the gentleman's game

BY SACHIN TENDULKAR

I was not even born when a debutant Sunil Manohar Gavaskar (SMG) took the cricketing world by storm in 1971. He scored 774 runs in his debut series and each one of us growing up in that decade had heard about his exploits. As a young boy, I knew I had someone to look up to and be like. We have interacted on various occasions but one instance very early on in my career stands out.

As a 14-year-old, I was not recognised as the best junior cricketer at that level in spite of a credible and consistent performance. Having sensed my disappointment, SMG wrote me a letter of encouragement stating how many accolades beckoned in the future. It served as a boost during that crucial stage of my life. The 'Little Master', or 'Sunny G' as he is now referred to, has always impressed with his inimitable style, playing ethics and in-depth understanding of the game. He remains my hero. SMG retired a couple of years before I made my debut, and not playing with him as part of a team remains a regret. ■

Sachin Tendulkar *is a former captain of the Indian cricket team*

The Shero

P.T. USHA, 57

Her feats on the international stage spurred many Indian women to dream of a career in athletics

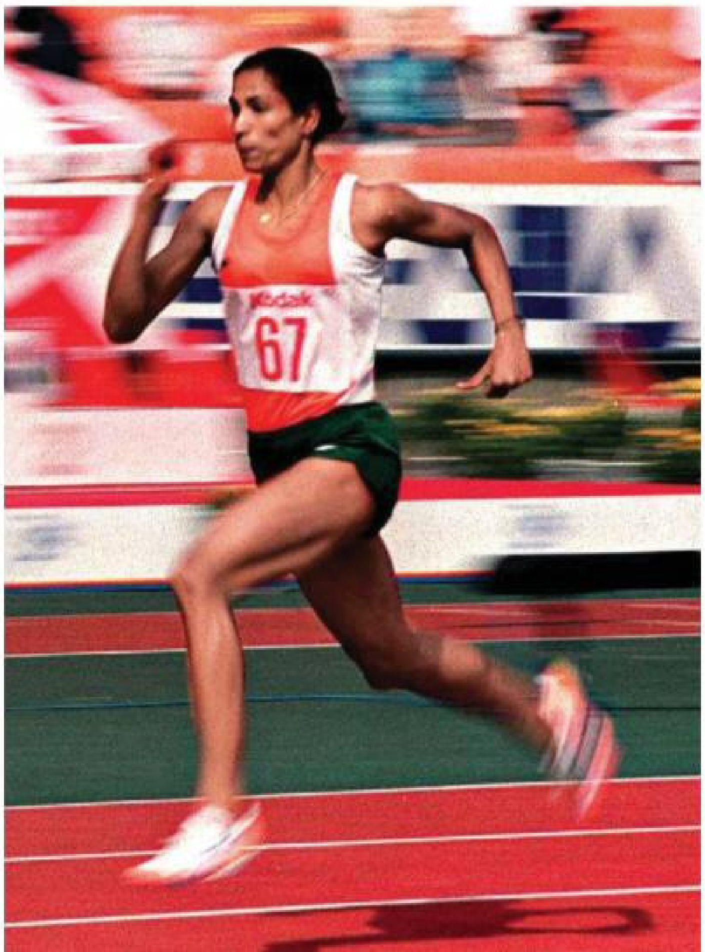
BY HIMA DAS

The first name that comes to mind when I talk about athletics in India is P.T. Usha. She has been inspirational for millions of girls wanting to opt for sports as a career. In my formative years, I looked up to her and aspired to become like her. I'm on that journey, and if I can inspire even half the girls of our country to strive for higher goals, like P.T. Usha did, I would feel highly blessed.

P.T. Usha won many international medals and awards in her career. Though she narrowly missed out on an Olympic medal at the 1984 Los Angeles Games, finishing fourth in the women's 400m hurdles and being denied of a bronze by one-hundredth of a second, that moment gave India hope.

She is a spirited athlete who rose through the ranks and was determined to put India on the world map with her performance on the track. She is a true pathbreaker who fought her way through both in the sport and in society, and has opened many paths for me and others to shine with confidence at the international level. ■

Hima Das *is a track and field athlete*



AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

THE STUFF OF LEGEND

SACHIN TENDULKAR, 48

SUMEET INDER SINGH

World cricket has two distinct periods: before and after Sachin

BY SOURAV GANGULY

I have known Sachin for 35 years now and have no hesitation in saying that he is one of the greatest ever to have played our sport. When I first saw him, the thing that struck me was that he just did not want to stop batting. His passion was infectious. From our very first meeting started a bond that exists even today. As captain, he was my go-to guy; in my debut Test in 1996, it was Sachin who repaired my bat at Tea when it needed to be taped up. Blessed with incredible talent, Sachin's dedication and devotion to the game are what made him the player he eventually became. It was a pleasure playing alongside him and captaining him.

With Sachin, it is a very personal bond. Our families are very close; in New Zealand, in the late 1990s, my wife Dona had looked after an infant Sara for a bit so that Anjali managed to catch up on some much-needed sleep. When it came to batting and you had Sachin in the team, it was like an insurance. A hundred international 100s—you just don't need to say anything more, do you! ■

Sourav Ganguly *is a former Indian cricket captain*

INDIA TODAY ARCHIVES

Fast and Furious

LEANDER PAES, 48

Known for both his fitness and finesse, he has given Indian tennis many highs

BY MAHESH BHUPATHI

It was while participating in the Junior Wimbledon that I started interacting properly with Leander. He had already won the Junior Wimbledon back then. Thereafter, I have seen him perform miracles at the Davis Cup and in the 1996 Olympics, breaking the glass ceiling. I was a Leander fan. He had fast hands; his reflexes were something to be proud of.

From a fan, we became friends. Then, we became partners and, in 1999, the first pair to reach the finals of all Grand Slam tournaments in a year in the Open era—winning the French Open and the Wimbledon as top seeds. It was special because an all-Indian pair winning a Major and starting a season in such a dominant fashion was unprecedented. We had become a world-beating team. Leander will remain one of the best India has ever produced. ■

***Mahesh Bhupathi** is a tennis player. He has won several Grand Slam tournaments*

GUN METTLE

ABHINAV BINDRA, 38

The shooter's individual Olympic gold democratised the sport in the country

BY RANDHIR SINGH

ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

I have seen Abhinav Bindra grow up as his father was my junior in school in Patiala. He was a reticent child and, in many senses, a quintessential air-rifle shooter. Abhinav won India its first individual Olympic gold at Beijing in 2008. He was completely focused on the task at hand and trained under a German coach. He had a private range provided by his father. But what makes him stand out is that he built himself up mentally to be a champion. Abhinav had participated in two Olympics before the Beijing Games. His mental toughness and training made sure the previous Olympic outings acted as learning experiences. In shooting, temperament is key to being a winner.

Abhinav's other accomplishment is the 'democratisation' of shooting as a sport. Shotgun shooters in both trap and skeet events have always represented India at international events and won medals, but not many air-rifle and air-pistol shooters. Most shotgun shooters came from privileged backgrounds, which enabled them to pursue the sport given the expenses involved. The event Abhinav picked up—air-rifle shooting—wasn't big in India until then. It was less glamorous than shotgun shooting and much less expensive as well.

Abhinav's success has popularised shooting in India. Schools and colleges have encouraged air-rifle and air-pistol shooting and thousands of youngsters now compete in state and national championships. Today it's more difficult to make it to the Indian shooting squad than to win an international medal. ■

Randhir Singh *is a former trap and skeet shooter*

GAME CHANGER

KAPIL DEV, 62

The all-rounder inspired self-belief in the team to script underdog India's 1983 World Cup win against the Windies

BY SUNIL GAVASKAR

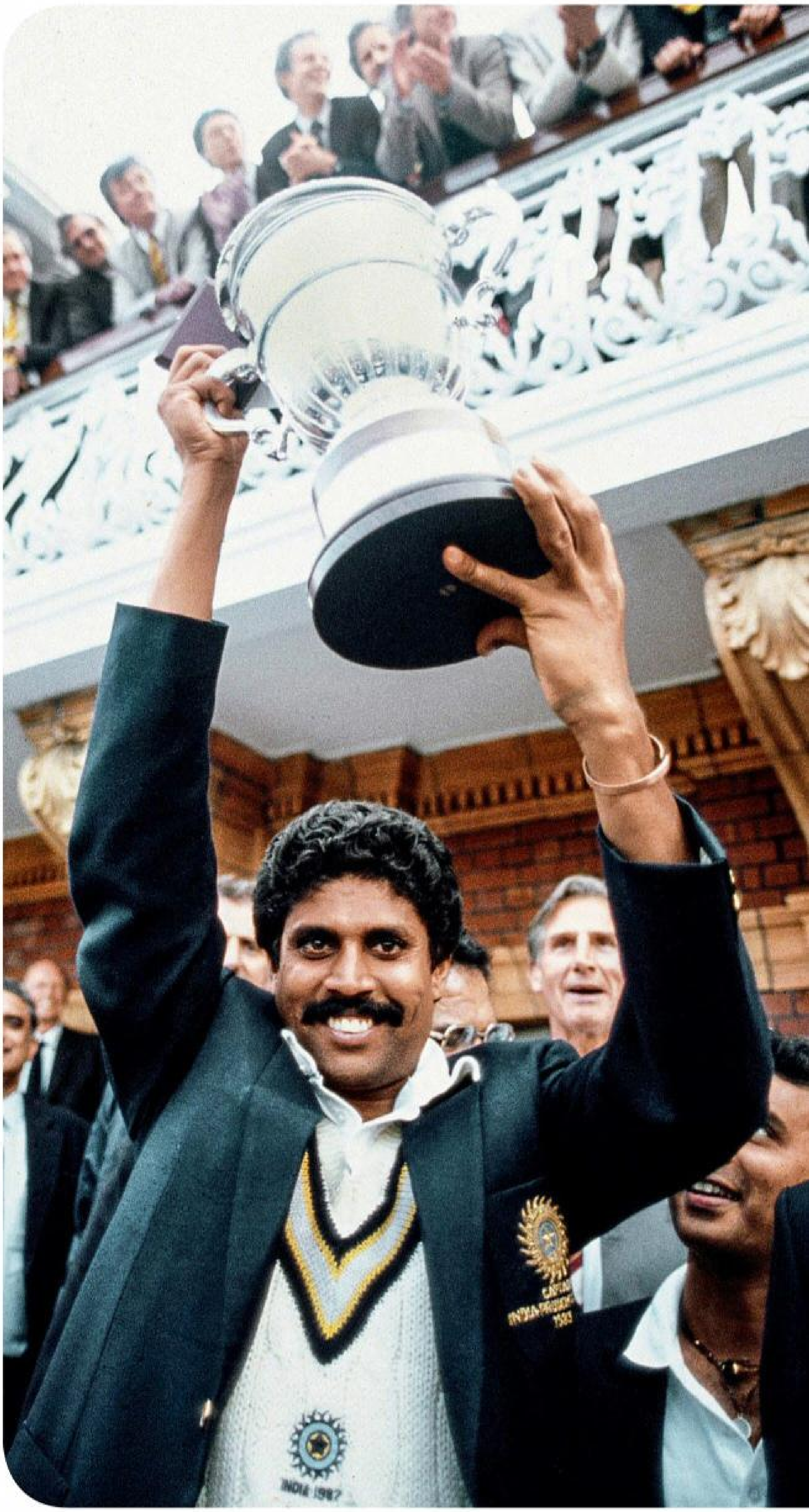
Kapil Dev Nikhanj came into Indian cricket like a breath of fresh air whose fragrance is still lasting. His sheer enjoyment of playing cricket was so infectious that soon hundreds of thousands of young, budding cricketers wanted to play like him.

India has had fast bowlers before but nobody who could curve the new ball like Kapil did. He got wickets all over the world, including on the batting-friendly pitches in India; for around three years and eight series, no opening pair got a century partnership against us. Not just as an opening bowler but also with the bat, he changed the course of many a match and won it for India. Who can forget that innings of 175 not out against Zimbabwe in the 1983 World Cup?

For me, though, the best was his half-century against Pakistan on a Wankhede pitch that was affording spin as it turned the game in our favour. Kapil could field anywhere, and again, his catch to dismiss Viv Richards in that unforgettable 1983 final was a game changer. No other player in Indian cricket history has changed the course of the game with the bat, ball and hands like 'Kaps' did.

Today if India has a new-ball attack that is feared around the cricketing world, it's simply because Kapil showed them the way. Quite simply, he is India's cricketer not just for the century but for eras to come. ■

Sunil Gavaskar *is a former Indian cricket captain. He and Kapil Dev played numerous Tests and ODIs together*



ADRIAN MURRELL/ GETTY IMAGES

Azadi Ka
Amrit Mahotsav

SEMISESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION Amrit MAHOTSAV OF INDEPENDENCE

An IMPACT Presentation

> **We are fortunate that the time and the country have given us the responsibility of making this semisesquicentennial celebration a grand success. In a way, efforts will be done to make this celebration of 75 years of freedom, the semisesquicentennial celebration (Amrit Mahotsav) of independence, a festival that touches the hearts of all Indians, a festival of every Indian!**
>
> ***— Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India***

The pride of a nation remains alive only when it continues to pass on the legacy of self-respect and sacrifice to the next generation as well. It truly marches on the path of development only when it identifies with the pride of its past experiences and heritage. In this respect, India has vast reserves and rich history to be proud of. Taking this as the fundamental mantra, Prime Minister Narendra Modi decided to celebrate '(Semisesquicentennial) Amrit Mahotsav' of freedom to commemorate 75 years of India's independence. The Prime Minister inaugurated the programme by flagging off the march from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi on the occasion of the completion of 91 years of the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi's Dandi March on March 12, 2021. This programme has been started in the country 75 weeks before the 75th anniversary of independence on August 15, 2022, and it will run until August 15, 2023. Semisesquicentennial celebrations (Amrit Mahotsava) will be launched on a large scale from August 15, 2021.

The British had attacked the Indian values as well as its self-reliance. In the year 1930, under British rule, Indians did not have the right to make salt. They had to use only the salt coming from England. Not only this, the British had also imposed multifold taxes on this salt. Mahatma Gandhi felt this pain of the people and caught pulse of the common man. In protest against this common pang, he started the Salt Satyagraha on March 12, 1930. Under this, Bapu started on a 24-day journey from Sabarmati Ashram in Ahmedabad to the seaside city of Dandi, where he broke law giving the British exclusive right to make salt in colonial India, and, made salt. He covered a distance of 340 kms in 24 days. 8,000 Indians including Bapu were imprisoned during the Salt Satyagraha. But the movement continued and ended with the release of Mahatma Gandhi a year later. At that moment Gandhiji had said with the salt in his hand, "With this, I am shaking the foundation of the British Empire." His resolve later fructified.

At that time salt was a symbol of India's self-reliance. Within a few days, this movement of Gandhiji had become the movement of every Indian. Later on, it became the resolve of every Indian. In our country, salt does not signify an ordinary thing. It means honesty, trust and loyalty. One can still hear the proverb that we have eaten the salt of the country. It is mentioned this way not because salt is a very precious commodity, but it is because salt is a symbol of hard work and equality. That is why salt is kept out of the tax net. Entrepreneurs also do salt business on minimal margin. Dandi March is also known as Salt Satyagraha. The movement inspired stalwarts such as Martin Luther King Jr. and James Bevel. Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha is one of the most influential movements in the world.

FREEDOM MARCH TILL DANDI

This journey of Gandhiji had given a new inspiration to the people and connected them with the freedom struggle. At the same time, India's vision on its independence was conveyed to the whole world. This is so because in the Dandi March of Bapu, Indian disposition and outlook had been blended with the urge for independence. To revive the historic moments of Gandhiji's Dandi March, on March 12, 2021, on the occasion of 91 years of the Salt Satyagraha, Prime Minister Modi launched the Semisesquicentennial celebration (Amrit Mahotsav) by flagging off the 'Freedom Padyatra' from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi. In the first phase of this march, 81 people were sent under the leadership of Union Minister Prahlad Patel. They completed the 75 km padyatra reaching Nadiad in four days as per the schedule. Many senior BJP leaders including Union Minister Giriraj Singh, Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, MP Devu Singh Chouhan etc participated in the march. Number of participants in this padyatra was limited to 80 as equal number of freedom fighters including Mahatma Gandhi had embarked on Dandi march. People from different groups joined the padyatra on the way to Dandi. This 25-day-long symbolic journey organized under the 'Semisesquicentennial of independence (Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav)' in the historic Dandi village of Gujarat concluded on April 6. A function was organized to remember the contribution of Gandhiji on this occasion. Speaking on the occasion, Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu called upon everyone to draw inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi who always used polite and respectful language even for his opponents. He advised that political parties should treat each other as rivals and not as enemies.

NATIONWIDE PROGRAMMES

On the call of the Prime Minister, programmes under the 'Amrit Samaroh' are being held across the country. Along with Sabarmati, this festival was simultaneously launched on March 12 from many historical places across the country including the Cellular Jail in Andamans that symbolizes the culmination of the freedom struggle; the land of Kekar Moning in Arunachal Pradesh which witnessed the 'Anglo-Indian War'; August Kranti Maidan in Mumbai; Jallianwala Bagh in Punjab; Meerut, the revolutionary land of the launch of the first freedom struggle; Kakori and Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh. During that time the countrymen felt as if the energies of innumerable struggles for freedom, innumerable sacrifices and innumerable austerities were being re-awakened simultaneously all over India. Indeed, when we imagine about the era of slavery where millions of people waited for the

dawn of freedom for centuries, we realize how historic and glorious the occasion of 75 years of independence is. In this festival, there are shadows of the traditions of eternal India, the freedom struggle and also the proud moments of the progress of independent India. That is why the focus in the 'Amrit Mahotsav' has been kept on five pillars. Based on these messages, Charkha Abhiyan and self-reliant incubators have been launched. With this, the Prime Minister hopes that the present generation will get this opportunity of 75 years of independence like ambrosia - an elixir that will inspire us to live for the country every moment, to do something for the country.

Similarly, different struggles and incidents related with the freedom struggle too have their own inspirations and messages which today's India can imbibe and move forward. Even today, no Indian can forget the freedom struggle of the year 1857, Mahatma Gandhi's return from abroad and reminding the country again of the power of Satyagraha, Lokmanya Tilak's call for complete independence, Azad Hind Fauj's March to Delhi under the leadership of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and his 'Delhi Chalo' slogan. The unforgettable movement of the year 1942 and the 'Quit India' call are among countless such moments from which we draw inspiration and energy. There are so many martyred fighters to whom the nation expresses its gratitude everyday.

Semisesquicentennial celebration (Amrit Mahotsav) is a collective resolve to make India as dreamed by these immortal sons. In fact, there are a number of such movements within the freedom struggle. There are so many struggles which have not come before the country as they should have. These struggles, and strivings are in themselves India's strong assertions of truth against falsehood beside being proofs of India's independent nature.

Just as the history of the freedom movement, the journey of 75 years after independence is a reflection of the hard work, innovation and entrepreneurship of ordinary Indians. We Indians, whether living in the country or abroad, have proved ourselves through our hard work. We are proud of our constitution. We are proud of our democratic traditions. India, the mother of democracy, is still moving forward by strengthening democracy. India, rich in knowledge and science, is leaving its mark from Mars to Moon today. Today, the Indian Army possesses immense potential and we are moving forward economically, as well. Today India's startup ecosystem has become the center of attraction in the world. Today, every platform in the world echoes with India's potential and Indian talent.

> **Emerging out of the darkness of scarcity, India is moving forward to fulfill aspirations of more than 130 crore people. The corona pandemic threw a spanner in it, otherwise India was moving rapidly towards a five-trillion-dollar economy.**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is very happy about the fact that we are celebrating 75 years of independent India and 125 years of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's birth anniversary simultaneously. This confluence is not only a match of dates but also a wonderful combination of India's vision of the past and the future. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose had said that India's freedom struggle is not only against British imperialism but against global imperialism. Netaji had described the independence of India as necessary for the entire humanity. With time, this Netaji's views proved to be true. With the India becoming independent, voices of independence were raised in other countries of the world and in a very short time the scope of imperialism was reduced. Even today, the achievements of India are not only our own but those are going to be the torch-bearer for the whole world. These achievements give hope to the entire humanity. Our journey of development with self-reliance is to give impetus to the development of the whole world. This has proven true in the present Corona period. Today the whole world is benefiting from India's self-reliance in vaccine manufacturing and hopes to bring humanity out of the crisis brought by the pandemic. This mantra is our inspiration in our path to get the nectar of bright future of India from the 'Amrit Mahotsav.'

Appeal to preserve memories: Modi hopes that during the 'Amrit Mahotsav' of independence innumerable ideas will emerge from suggestions and original ideas of the countrymen. Efforts are being made to connect common people and ensure public participation so that no citizen of the country would feel that he is not a part of this 'Amrit Mahotsav.' Keeping this in mind, slogan, essay, art and writing competitions are being organized across the country. He has urged various institutions that 75 places related to freedom movement be marked on the map of India and in schools, children should be asked to identify places like Bardoli, Champaran and so on. Students of law should find out 75 such incidents reflecting the legal war going on during the freedom struggle. How did the legal battle go? Who were the people fighting the legal battle? What efforts were made to save the freedom fighters? What was the attitude of the judiciary of the British Empire? We can write all this. Those interested in drama, may write plays. Students of fine arts should draw paintings on events that they like; songs and poems be written. Initially, it should all be handwritten. Later it should also be given digital form. The Prime Minister wishes that these efforts of schools and colleges should become their heritage, and efforts should be made to complete this work before August 15. With this initiative, a fully ideological establishment will be ready. Later on, districtwide, statewide and countrywide competitions may also be organized. The government is ensuring that maximum people of the country are included in this campaign. Measures are being taken on a large scale to motivate the common people to join the festival. In this connection, the CRPF has been given the responsibility of creating awareness among the people about the 'Amrit festival' at major historical centers. Through them, the country will pay tribute to the freedom fighters by playing bands at 15 historical places by August 15, 2022. Such appeals have been made at district level across the country. According to the instructions issued by the Union Ministry of Culture, under this initiative, folklores, stories and incidents related to known-unknown heroes are being compiled. Achievements of the heroes of freedom struggle are being preserved so that the younger generation becomes aware of the nationality.

THE HISTORY AND PRIDE OF ACHIEVEMENTS

Prime Minister Modi hopes that the festival of 75 years of independence will be a celebration in which the spirit of freedom struggle, tribute to the martyrs and their pledge to build India will be experienced. This festival should reflect the glory of 'Sanatan Bharat' (Perennial India) and the aura of modern India and this festival should also reflect the light of spirituality of the sages and the talent and strength of our scientists. Modi believes that this event will showcase our achievements in these 75 years to the world and will also provide us with a framework of resolve for the next 25 years.

> **In the eyes of the Prime Minister, the 'Amrit Mahotsav of independence' means the elixir of the energy of freedom, the elixir of inspiration from the freedom fighters and the elixir of new resolutions. The meaning of the 'Amrit Mahotsav of independence' is also the elixir of self-reliance.**

The contemporary generation will find this opportunity of 75 years of independence like nectar, an elixir that will inspire us to live and do something for the country every moment. With this thought in mind, this festival has been based on five pillars.

THE PART OF NEW EDUCATION POLICY

The education policy of the British era had been continuing in country. All kinds of flaws were being pointed out in it. Experts believe that in the year 1835, Lord Macaulay, while making education policy, conspired to weaken India that had the status of 'Vishwa Guru' in ancient times. Experts also believe that our rich culture was vastly damaged under the British rule. The policy not leading to employability of the youth had been causing heavy damages to the nation. An even bigger sting was that the youth considered it to be a symbol of slavery. Now the new National Education Policy is being implemented in the country in a phased manner. On the occasion of 'Amrit Mahotsav', this new National Education Policy has also become a part of it. An education policy of national importance will play an important role in building a new India. It will also help in meeting the challenge posed by changes taking place in the field of education. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is hopeful that initiatives like Vidya Pravesh, Nishtha-2, Safal, Academic Credit Bank, National Digital Education Architecture, National Education Policy Forum and Indian Sign Language will help develop our youth proficiencies in various fields as well as potential in every field. Now, instead of them going abroad for good education, foreigners will come here to study. The new education policy will also help our youth in thinking one step ahead of the world. Now the country has to become self-reliant in every field. The benefit of education delivered in one's own language will be offered to the poor, backward and tribal youth of the country, who till now had to face the problem of languages. From this year, many engineering colleges in the country have started teaching in regional languages. This initiative can be considered as a major achievement in the celebration of 75 years of independence.

FIVE PILLARS OF CELEBRATIONS (AMRIT MAHOTSAV)

There are five pillars of the historic 'Amrit Mahotsav.' The history of 75 years of independence has been wrapped around these pillars. These pillars will inspire to move forward towards realization of the dreams of independent India. These are

1. **The Freedom Struggle**
2. **Thought on 75 points**
3. **Achievements of 75 years**
4. **Work on 75 issues, and**
5. **75 resolutions.**

NOT JUST GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

Initiating a big campaign from home makes achieving the goal easier. With this thought in the mind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has appealed to the BJP leaders and workers to actively participate in the semisesquicentennial celebrations (Amrit Mahotsav) of independence. The result is clearly visible in the Hindi-belt states. Programmes are being organized under this festival, from district to block levels. Modi's clear message in this regard is that 'Amrit Mahotsav' should not remain just a government event. People's participation has to be ensured to cherish the heritage of the country and take it forward as people's movement. The Prime Minister has asked the MPs to vigorously celebrate the 'Amrit Mahotsav' of independence in their parliamentary constituencies and suggested that they form a team of two workers each in each assembly constituency who would visit 75 villages and stay there for 75 days. This group should go amid the public and spread awareness about digital literacy. All the MPs of the party should represent this programme. In the meantime, they should conduct an awareness campaign about digital literacy among the public. Under this 'Mahotsav', he suggested to the MPs to organize events including competitions of local sports and to promote cleanliness related programmes. The Prime Minister's thinking behind this is that many people have sacrificed their lives for freedom, but we have to explain to the public whether we can live for the country. This sentiment has to be spread among the public. The semisesquicentennial (Amrit Mahotsav) of Independence is not just a government event. It should be in the form of a mass movement as we have to move forward with public participation. If the BJP is celebrating this festival being organized at the grassroots as a celebration of independence, then surely leaders of other parties will also move in this direction. It can be expected that this festival can become popular unto the village level.

> **Amid the 'Amrit Mahotsav', the government has made an appeal to the youth and intellectuals to contribute to the efforts to complete writing the history of our freedom fighters. The appeal is also for more vigorously bringing the achievements of our society during and after the freedom movement in front of the world.**

People in the fields of the arts, theatre, film industry and digital entertainment will should cull out unique stories from the past and bring them to life for generations to come. By learning from the past, youth can take up the responsibility of building the future. Be it science, technology, medicine, politics, art or culture, whatever field you are in, you must try to better its future, its tomorrow. The Prime Minister hopes that with the 130 crore countrymen joining this 'Amrit Mahotsav' of independence and taking inspiration from lakhs of freedom fighters, India will be able to achieve biggest of goals. If every Indian takes even one step for the country, for the society, then the country moves forward 130 crore steps. India will once again become self-reliant. If we succeed in this direction, then no one will be able to stop India from becoming a great power of the world.

nafed
A Farmers' Cooperative

Kisan se .... Kitchen tak

nafed bazaar

Sale of grocery & food products at discounted prices through

- Nafed Stores
- Franchisee Stores
- Super Stockist

Popular Nafed Brand Products

Rice Bran Oil

Pulses

Spices

Tea

Rice

Organic products

Saffron

nafed
Supreme Basmati Rice
PULSES
Besan
Mirch Powder
Shahi Paneer Masala
Chana Masala
Premium Lemon Green Tea
Black Pepper Powder
Haldi Powder
Masala Tea
Green Tea

Nafed Retail Outlets in Delhi NCR

Ashram Chowk	East of Kailash	Krishi Bhawan	Rohini	Dwarka
East Kidwai Nagar	GTB Hospital	HIPA, Gurugram	New Moti Bagh	Lajpat Nagar (Metro Station)

Nafed Retail Outlets in Other Zones

Mussoorie	Shimla	Panchkula	Punjab

Nafed undertakes Institutional supply of Grocery and Food items to Prestigious Organizations including Parliament House, IRCTC, Hospitals, PSUs, Schools, Hostels, Various Ministries of Govt. of India, IITs etc.

nafed bazaar

Consumer Marketing Division

National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited

Nafed House, Siddhartha Enclave Ring Road, Ashram Chowk, New Delhi-110014 (INDIA)
Tel.: +91-11-26340019, website : www.nafed-india.com, twitter: @nafedindia

NAFED IN THE SERVICE OF FARMERS AND CONSUMERS SINCE 1958

GeM
Government
e Marketplace

Efficient • Transparent • Inclusive

One India One Platform

A Gateway to a Self-reliant Us!

The niche market of Indian MSMEs gets fuelled by digitization, steps up higher, and how!

When Amrawati Devi, an entrepreneur from Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh wanted to look at the canvas for her business, she was confined to a local market, few buyers and a restricted network. These limitations are now well behind her. In 2020, she has a bigger network, a larger audience and government buyers for her business. Like Amrawati, several sellers have witnessed a new dawn for their businesses in the last few years and finally, a smooth path towards higher revenues. Procurement has been redefined!

When the baton of procurement passed from traditional to digital, the objective solely focussed on creating a hassle-free, contactless and paperless ecosystem. Targeted at elevating millions of Indian MSMEs, a new vision guided the creation of a platform leveraging digital technology to a reengineered procurement process. As an initiative, Government e Marketplace (GeM) was launched in 2016 by honorable Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi. He visualized assisting sellers, proprietors, and MSMEs in displaying their products and services on a common digital platform through which they could get access to government buyers like ministries, PSUs, agencies and companies.

> *It has brought down transaction time and cost of procurement of goods and services with efficiency and transparency. Most important is that GeM portal adheres to the highest standard of information security and user privacy.*
>
> *- Rajesh Tiwari,*
> *Awadh Security Service Pvt. Ltd., WB*

GeM is being enabled by Artificial Intelligence, Deep Learning, Machine learning and more. Rich in features, GeM has been developed keeping in mind the users – the Indian sellers and government buyers. From learning on registration, bidding and on features, GeM conducts training sessions regularly.

The Story of GeM's Three Pillars and Why?

GeM bases its operations on its three pillars - Transparency, Efficiency and Inclusivity, established to ensure ease of doing business for Indian sellers, to help them realise their entrepreneurial dreams and improve their profitability. The portal is designed to ensure full transparency in procurement process and to protect sellers against fake entities / online fraudsters, thus, enabling fair business.

> *Being a women entrepreneur, I appreciate and thank GeM for bringing cutting-edge features like bidding and payment procedure under one digital platform. We count on GeM to go the extra mile.*
>
> *- Amrawati Devi,*
> *720Degree Ultra Consultancy LLP*

The seamless portal experience bears testimony to disruptive technology, realising a vision of ensuring ease. With enhancement of its features, it has become easier to register, upload and participate in bids. The primary objective has been efficiency in the process and thus, creating a marketplace that is optimised for everyone. GeM is committed to social inclusion or inclusivity for every seller, irrespective of business size and includes women entrepreneurs, start-ups, artisans, weavers, etc. as deserving members of GeM.

GeM - An Embodiment of People-centric Initiatives

GeM always ensures there is something for everyone on its platform. Key initiatives by GeM include - Womaniya, SHGs, start-ups, artisans, weavers, tribal craftsmen, and others from India. GeM has worked closely with several Ministries to provide online access to markets for under-served seller groups in remote and rural areas of India.

> *Team GeM has done a commendable job by incorporating specific requirements of GAIL into the GeM system and facilitated GAIL for the successful award of the contracts in a reasonable time.*
>
> *- K.R.M Rao,*
> *Executive Director (C&P), GAIL (India) Limited*

As on 22nd July 2021, 28,365 artisans and 1.49 lakh weavers were registered with GeM. There are around 28 exclusive product categories for handloom products on GeM and 170 custom product categories for handicraft products.

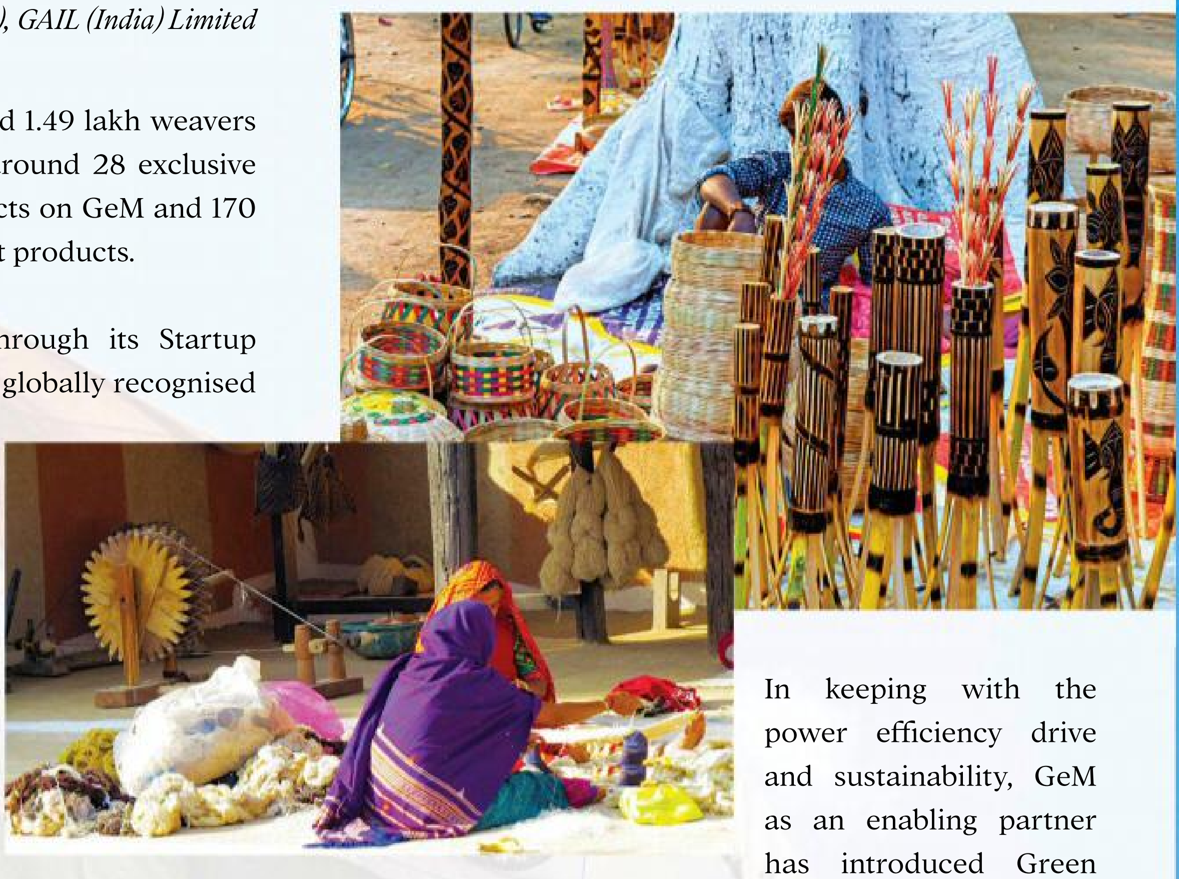
GeM assists start-ups across India through its Startup Runway initiative and it has launched 10 globally recognised start-up sub-sectors as well. Presently, 10,360+ start-ups are registered on GeM and have fulfilled 74,935 orders worth over Rs. 3,500 crore. 87 of these have listed their innovative products on Startup Runway.

Through the Saras Collection, GeM has created a space in collaboration with the Ministry of Rural Development that showcases daily utility products made by self-help groups (SHGs) from different parts of India. The product range has handicrafts, handloom and textiles, office accessories, grocery and pantry, personal care and hygiene. Currently, there are 3,000+ SHGs registered, who have listed approx. 1,000+ products on GeM.

Under the umbrella of GeM, a dedicated portal exquisitely displaying handcrafted tribal handicrafts, textiles, paintings and minor forest produce has been developed with TRIFED, Ministry of Tribal Affairs. GeM has facilitated the listing of around 4,500 products, ranging from metal craft, tribal textiles, jewellery, tribal paintings, cane and bamboo, pottery, gifts and novelties, to organic and natural products on the portal. Over 4,000 products made by tribal entrepreneurs are on GeM.

The "Khadi India" showcase initiative includes handwoven natural fibre cloth products from the weavers of India aiming to provide them market access to government buyers. The khadi weavers can list their products in four exclusive product categories. Around 4,157+ sellers have registered on GeM. The initiative of "The Divyangjan Collection" displays finely crafted products made by persons with disabilities or special needs, i.e., divyangjan, and provides them an access to government buyers. Sellers can list their products in six exclusive product categories on the portal.

An initiative by GeM with National Bamboo Mission 'The Green Gold Collection' showcases a range of handcrafted bamboo, handicrafts, disposals and daily utility products. Sellers can list their products in ten major product categories on the portal.



In keeping with the power efficiency drive and sustainability, GeM as an enabling partner has introduced Green ACs. Launched on World Environment Day 2021, GeM saw registration of Green ACs sellers and the market is responding very strongly.

> *We have been able to purchase for our stores through this not only at competitive prices but also in a fair, transparent, and time-bound manner.*
>
> *- Subhasis Das,*
> *Chief Manager, NSSHO, Odisha*

GeM motivates buyers and sellers by organizing 'Buyer and Seller Incentivization Scheme' that lets them participate, showcase their potential, thus earning them recognition. In addition, frictionless financing loan facility - GeM SAHAY app is making so many sellers get ready for big-ticket orders.

In the last 4 1/2 years, GeM has clocked a cumulative GMV of Rs. 1 lakh crore. We continue in our pursuit of collective and inclusive growth, and aim at a GMV of Rs. 1 lakh crore in this one Financial Year itself.

India is changing.
Are you joining the change?

रेल विकास निगम लिमिटेड
Rail Vikas Nigam Limited
गुणवत्ता, गति एवं पारदर्शिता
(A Government of India Enterprise)

6.7 Km Tunnel In Obulavaripalle - Krishnapattnam SPV Line completed in 25 months

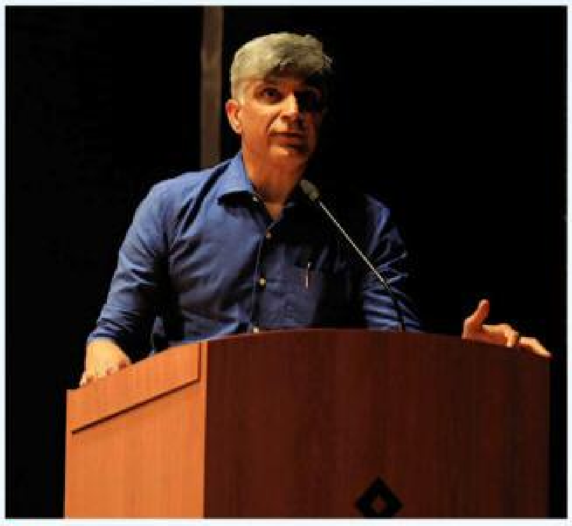
RAIL VIKAS NIGAM LTD. (RVNL)

SYMPHONY OF PROGRESS

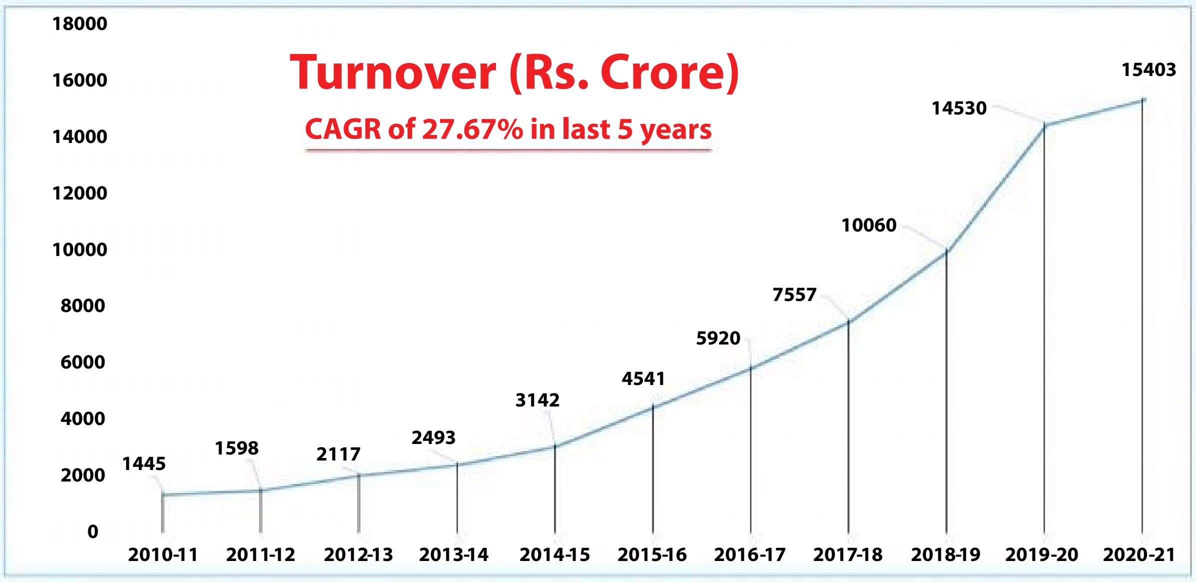
- Incorporated as a CPSE on 24-1-2003
- Vision of the then Hon'ble Prime Minister Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee

- Began operations in 2005.
- Project executing arm of Indian Railways.
- Granted 'Mini Ratna' status on 19th September 2013
- Under process of upgradation to 'Navratna'.

Noapara-Dakshineswar Metro - First Metro by a CPSE



Shri Pradeep Gaur
CMD, RVNL



Turnover (Rs. Crore)

CAGR of 27.67% in last 5 years

> *As Sri Pradeep Gaur, CMD RVNL aptly put it "RVNL has successfully lived up to its vision to emerge as the most efficient provider of rail infrastructure in the country, with best global construction practices, a sound financial base and a record of timely completion of projects. RVNL never sits complacent on its past laurels, but continues to set its goal still higher to scale new heights in the infrastructure space of the nation"*

Bridge no 134 (22X 43.8 PSC girder) Over River Mahanadi

MOU PERFORMANCE

Assessment Year	Rating	RVNL's rank among Railway CPSEs assessed by DPE Rank of RVNL
2007-08	Good	8th
2008-09	Very Good	10th
2009-10	Very Good	7th
2010-11	Excellent	5th
2011-12	Excellent	2nd
2012-13	Excellent	1st
2013-14	Excellent	2nd
2014-15	Excellent	1st
2015-16	Excellent	1st
2016-17	Excellent	1st
2017-18	Excellent	1st
2018-19	Excellent	2nd
2019-20*	-	-
2020-21*	-	-

* As per the indication, performance likely to be "Excellent"

Reconstruction of Pamban Bridge - First Vertical Bridge in India

RVNL has promoted SPVs to attract private participation in development of Railway Infrastructure

Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd. (RVNL)

Subsidiary

HSRC Infra Services Limited (100%)

SPV's

Kutch Railway Company Ltd. (KRCL)
(50.00%)-*Commissioned*

Krishnapatnam Railway Company Ltd. (KPRCL)
(49.76%)-*Commissioned*

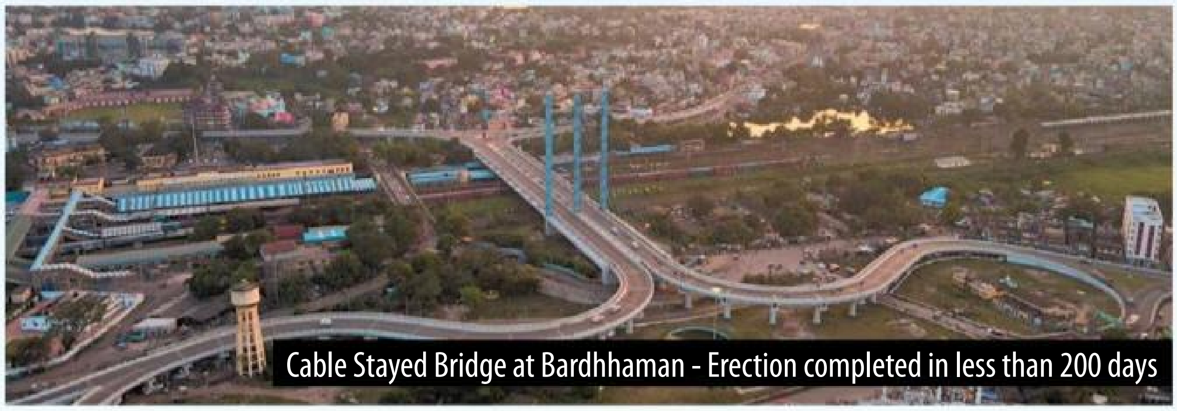
Bharuch Dahej Railway Corporation Ltd. (BDRCL)
(35.46%)-*Commissioned*

Haridaspur Paradeep Railway Company Ltd. (HPRCL)
(30.00%)-*Commissioned*

Angul Sukinda Railway Ltd. (ASRL)
(32.37%)-*June 22 commissioning.*

- **Rs. 76,000 crore revenue generated for Indian Railways without any investment by Ministry of Railway.**
- **Equity contribution of Rs. 1074.42 crore at a total project cost of Rs. 8916 crore.**

> “Says an upbeat Director, Operations RVNL Shri Rajesh Prasad, “Rail infrastructure directly translates to economic growth and human development across diverse regions of the country. Our mission is to create state-of-the-art rail transport infrastructure to meet the growing demand. The team of RVNL, from the chairman to the project teams in field, has worked in synergy to ride through even the recent tough times of the pandemic and lockdown to live up to its commitment to the nation.”


Cable Stayed Bridge at Bardhhaman - Erection completed in less than 200 days

4.62 km long bridge in Kerala completed in 27 months
Awarded 'Pre-stressed Concrete Structure of India'

PROJECTS COMPLETED UPTO MARCH 2021

S. NO.	PLAN HEADS	COMPLETED (km)	No. of Projects
1.	New Line (NL)	455.55	4
2.	Gauge Conversion (GC)	2070.20	8
3.	Doubling (DL)	4264.11	44
4.	Railway Electrification (RE)	6309.93	25
5.	Metropolitan Transport Project (MTP)	46.14	1
	TOTAL	**13,145.93**	**82**
6.	RE as part of Doubling/GC/NL	**3033.11**	
7.	Workshop projects (nos.)		10 No.
8.	Cable Stayed Bridge(nos.)		1 No.
9.	Others		9 Nos
	Total 102 projects fully commissioned.		**102**

RVNL executes 30-35% of the Indian Railway Infrastructures every year

Marathwada Rail Coach Factory, Latur Constructed in 26 months

WE ARE ENCOURAGING FARMERS TO GROW MORE OILSEEDS TO INCREASE THEIR INCOME

***Sanjeev Kumar Chadha, Managing Director, National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED)**, is an upbeat man as he recounts the turnaround story of the organisation, which was once on the verge of closure in 2015-16 but now has a cash surplus of 700 crore. He spoke on a range of issues in an exclusive interview. Excerpts...*

Sanjeev Kumar Chadha
Managing Director, National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED)

Could you take us to the journey of NAFED in recent times?

In 2015-16, we had a debt of around Rs 1700 crore and asked for the bailout package from the government but it was not materialising. We stared working really hard after -2016-17; the government too extended its full support to us. Now we have created a cash surplus of 700 crore. Our total turnover was around Rs 570 crore in 2015-16. Last year our turnover was Rs 32200 crore with a profit of Rs 480 crore. It never happened in the history of the organisation.

So, the pandemic period has had no impact on NAFED's growth?

During the pandemic period, the government had given us responsibility to buy from farmers because farmers resort to distress sale if their products are not bought at MSP. So, we worked very hard and opened all the centres despite COVID-19 restrictions and purchased more than Rs 25000-30000 crore worth foodstuff at MSP from the farmers.

Secondly, we played a very important role in the free food distribution to provide 1 kg pulses to each family. All the mills were shut. The challenge was procuring the pulses, taking them to mills, packing them and again carrying them to the last mile for distribution; also labour was unavailable. But we transported pulses to the mills and then began their distribution everywhere. To ensure delivery of pulses every month, we used all the means starting from roads, train, ship, and the Air Force, and ensured continuous supply.

When Article 370 was removed from Kashmir, we were suddenly asked to buy apples as apples are the backbone of the economy in Kashmir. Normally, we don't buy apples, as we don't deal in perishable commodities. Both connectivity and security were issues, but within five days we opened our office there. Since then we are doing high-density plantation of Apples. So, that is going to be gamechanger for the Kashmir's economy, because from dense plantation, productivity will increase five times.

Secondly, earlier we use to buy 20000-25000 tonnes of onions but this time we have purchased 2 lakh tonnes - highest in the history of the country. Though it was very difficult, still we purchased it through the cooperative socities and FPOs. The production cost of onion for farmers is Rs 12-14 per kg. Last year they got a price of Rs 10, this year they got a price of Rs 20-21 just because we bought it. With this, traders could not buy onion from them at fewer rates.

Apart from it, you are also bringing out your own products like rice bran oil...

There has been an overwhelming response to fortified rice bran oil launched by NAFED recently. The quality, packaging and price competitiveness has been very much appreciated by consumers. Presently India imports around 150 LMT of edible oils valued at Rs. 65,000 to 70,000 crores. The dependence on imported edible oils can be reduced only by bridging the gap between demand and supply.

Rice bran oil holds a great potential in India owing to its numerous health benefits and the fact that India is the leading producer of rice in the world after China. Selling the oil after fortification, as being done by NAFED, further enhances the health benefits. Increase in demand will obviously lead to an increase in domestic production of rice bran oil which will contribute to the PM's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

We have to come out of paddy and wheat obsession. So, we are encouraging farmers to grow more oilseeds which provide more income for them.

How are you contributing to fulfilling the vision of the Prime Minister to double farmers' income through improved crop productivity, diversification towards high value crops and assurance of remunerative prices to farmers?

NAFED is making best efforts to contribute to the attainment of the PM's vision of doubling farmers' income. Through procurement of oilseeds, pulses and food grains at the MSP, NAFED ensures a ready market and remunerative prices to farmers for their produce. NAFED has also diversified into certified seed production with the aim of producing high yielding good quality seed for the farmers.

Besides, NAFED is also supplying seed mini kits to the states for onward distribution to farmers free of cost against the Seed Mini kit programme of Government f India under the National Food Security Mission (NFSM).

HARVESTING HOPE

Ensuring a ready market and remunerative prices for agricultural produce through its countrywide procurement, storage and marketing operations, NAFED is making all-out efforts to contribute to the attainment of the PM's vision of doubling farmers' income.

Established on 2nd October 1958 with the primary aim to organise, promote and develop marketing, processing and storage of agricultural, horticultural and forest produce, National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED) is the apex federation of marketing cooperatives in the country providing remunerative prices to farmers for their produce and preventing their exploitation at the hands of private trade and middlemen. The federation has its presence in all states of India through a network of branches/ sub offices/member cooperatives, besides other infrastructure like pre cooling/cold storage units, general warehouses, grading packing units, onion storages, bio fertilizer plants, consumer marketing division and more.

One of the largest procurement as well as marketing agencies for agricultural products in India, NAFED plays a major role in stabilising food prices in the country, thus benefitting farmers and consumers alike. Ever since the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic from March 2020, solid infrastructure, and meticulous, well-coordinated operations of NAFED have helped in maintaining the supply chain of essential food stocks in the country.

As a nodal agency of the Central government for procurement of oilseeds and pulses under the Price Support Scheme (PSS), NAFED has been supplying food stocks to states for onward distribution to the poor at subsidised prices. NAFED played a crucial role in distribution of pulses to eligible households under the Prime Minister Garib Kalyan Yojna (PMGKY).

A quantity of 15 lakh MT of pulses (whole/processed) was supplied under the scheme during the period April to November 2020 during the prevailing COVID 19 pandemic alongwith 34000 MT whole gram under Atmanirbhar Bharat scheme.

Remarkable turnaround of NAFED

The organisation which incurred huge losses for a decade till 2015-16 bounced back and booked remarkable profits of Rs 226.81 crore during 2017-18. The profitability is since being sustained with increasing turnover and new business initiatives.

Initiatives of NAFED in Jammu & Kashmir

NAFED has been implementing Market Intervention Scheme of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare for Apple in Jammu & Kashmir since 2019 for providing alternate marketing channel to farmers so that they can get remunerative prices for their produce.

Besides, high density plantation of apple in 5500 hectares in two phases, NAFED proposes to create infrastructure for end-to-end supply chain which will include pre-conditioning, controlled atmosphere CA storage (60,000MT), onion storage (20,000MT), processing facilities (50,000MT), ripening chambers (5000MT), refrigerated transport (25–30nos.) and dry warehousing (20,000MT). NAFED in participation with private sector, initially proposes to create three clusters, one each in North and South Kashmir and one in Samba/Kathua region of Jammu Division.

This infrastructure is expected to increase the productivity by four times, and reduce the post-harvest losses by 50 per cent, which will not only double the income of the farmers but will also provide quality produce for consumers in rest of the country. Creation of these value chains will also ensure export of quality temperate horticulture produce of the UT to other countries which is at present limited to only few varieties of apple. Further, creation of this infrastructure will make direct employment opportunity for 50,000 educated youth of rural areas and indirect employment to about two lakh persons in the UT.

NAFED's intervention for procurement of cherries in J&K

After procuring apples, NAFED procured Kashmiri cherry directly from the growers for the very first time. The procurement was done through NAFED supported Farmer Producer Organization (FPO) at the tehsil level in various districts of J&K. The varieties involved were Makhmali and Mishri. Fruit was directly procured from the growers in the districts of Shopian, Pulwama and Baramulla, according to the market prices and direct payment was done to cultivators within three days of the purchase.

NAFED procures 2 Lakh MT of onion for Central Buffer from Rabi arrivals

In accordance with the directions of Department of Consumer Affairs (DoCA), Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, NAFED has commenced procurement of onion for the Central Buffer. A quantity of 2.08 lakh MT of onion valuing around Rs. 425.25 crores has been procured so far in the states of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh.

Facilitating, coordinating and promoting the marketing and trading activities of the cooperative institutions in agricultural commodities, NAFED has contributed hugely towards making cultivation more profitable and sustainable for farmers, and ensuring food security of the nation. Not surprisingly, NAFED has become a prominent global brand contributing greatly to the further growth of Indian economy.

UNDER YOUTH LEADERSHIP UTTARAKHAND ON THE PATH OF DEVELOPMENT

When Pushkar Singh Dhami became the Chief Minister of Uttarakhand on July 5, the move was considered as a well-planned strategy to speed up the pace of the development in the hill state. Keeping in view the special attachment of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the state, Dhami is leaving no stone unturned to come to the expectations.

Two big packages comprising Rs 200 crore for tourism and Rs 205 crore for the health sectors have already been announced by the Chief Minister which is seen as a major step to give relief to the people, who are badly affected by the corona pandemic.

At the age of 45, Dhami is the youngest Chief Minister of Uttarakhand. This is why all his decisions, taken so far, are considering bold as the people look up at the new Dhami government with high hopes.

From Uttarkashi to Udhamsingh Nagar, he has already crisscrossed the length and breadth of the hill state where he is holding meetings and interacting with a cross section of people. He has taken various administrative decisions in the larger interest of the state. Dhami is virtually racing against the time as only six months are left for the assembly elections.

In one of the key administrative decisions, the government has instructed all the officials to devote at least two hours for solving the public grievances. On the other hand, Dhami has also started a janata durbar where scores of people are turning up with their grievances.

Already, Dhami has made it clear that his top priority is to put Uttarakhand in the category of fast-moving state economies and also at the top of the best governed states. Dhami is also moving ahead with the spirit of the Prime Minister's new mantra -- "Sabka saath (everybody's support), sabka vikas (everybody's development) aur sabka vishwas (everybody's trust). The Chief Minister has also pledged to realize the dreams of the statehood activists, who wanted hill-centric development and to stop the menace of the migration of youths to the plains in search of jobs.

The Dhami government has made it clear that it would continue the all round development. For this, it has adopted six resolutions which include corruption-free government and providing prompt services to the people of the state.

With the job-losses on the rise in the covid pandemic, the Dhami government has also provided a sense of new hope to the unemployed youths. The government has asserted that it would, in the next six months, fill 20,000 to 22,000 government posts which are lying vacant in various departments. The state

Pushkar Singh Dhami
Chief minister of Uttarakhand

A verification drive will be launched to stop the illegal and unauthorised land purchase in hills. Steps will be taken to conserve and secure the culture and social milieu of of hills.

'Him prahari' scheme will be launched with the help of ex servicemen and youth of Uttarakhand to stop the migration from state

High level committee will be formed to deal with the concerns regarding the land law. It will also pay attention to the conservation of the land of the state along with subjects related to employment and investment.

Emotions and concerns of the public will be taken into consideration regarding the decision about devasthanam board.
The decision about the Devasthanam Board will be taken after discussion with all stakeholders while ensuring the interest of priests and purohits

For Population control a high level committee will be constituted to take steps regarding implementation of an effective law.

cabinet has also put seal of approval on this decision. In a separate decision, the stipend of guest teachers has been raised from Rs 15000 to Rs 25000.

The health of the people in the pandemic time is a big concern in the state. Taking lessons from the past, the Dhami government is embarking on a well-planned strategy to strengthen the health sector in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. The aim of the government is to provide best health care facilities to all citizens so that they do not face difficulties when it is most needed. The Chief Minister has already announced a big Rs 205 crore health package which will benefit 3.73 lakh people. The government doctors will be paid one-time bonus of Rs 10,000 and also Rs 3000 will be given to group C and D employees of the health department. This will benefit 61000 employees in the health sector.

Asha workers will also be given Rs 2000-2000 per month in the next five months. Along with this, one mobile tablet each will also be provided to 1120 asha and anganwadi workers. Besides, ayurvedic and homeopathic kits will also be distributed to these personnel with the aim of protecting them from the ill effects of Covid-19.

The government has also expressed its commitment to set up separate medical colleges in Pithoragarh and Haridwar districts. A budgetary provision of Rs 70 crore each will be made in this regard.

All necessary arrangements are being made in view of the possible third wave of the corona. Adequate number of oxygen, ICU, ventilators and separate wards for children are being made in all district hospitals and other health centres.

By December 2021, the vaccination drive against corona will be completed.

Tourism plays an important role in economic growth and employment generation in Uttarakhand where chardham yatra is also considered the backbone of the economy. In a move to give fresh lease of life to the tourism sector, Dhami has announced Rs 200 crore package for the tourism sector which has also been adversely affected by the corona pandemic. The government would transfer money to all those people who are involved in the tourism-related businesses. The chardham yatra has been suspended in view of the corona pandemic which has adversely affected the livelihoods of the people. Nearly 1.64 lakh families will be benefited through this package. A special amount of Rs 2000-2000 will be deposited to the bank accounts of all those people whose businesses were affected.

In view of the covid pandemic, a relaxation of one year has been given to the candidates under the ambit of the Public Service Commission which will be applicable till June 30, 2022.

One big task before Dhami is to complete the remaining developmental works at Kedarnath which is being closely monitored by the Prime Minister. For this purpose, he is holding close parleys with the top government officials. On the chardham devasthanam board Act, the government has set up a high-powered committee to take remedial measures on certain reservations expressed by the stakeholders.

BRINGING SMILES TO LITTLE ONES

This is a scheme to bring smiles on the faces of children, who lost their parents in the covid period in Uttarakhand. Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami has launched Mukhya Mantri Vatsalya Yojana to support these children, a scheme which is first of its kind. The scheme will give financial protection to 2,347 such children in the state. Children covered under the scheme will get an allowance of Rs 3,000 per month up to the age of 21. The state government will also take care of their education and reserve five percent of government jobs for them under the scheme. The government will also provide free food to these kids. In the first phase, 1,062 children got financial support under the scheme, the chief minister said.

The void created by the loss of one's parents is impossible to fill but the government will take care of such children as their guardians, he said. "We are trying to bring a smile to the faces of children who lost their parents to the pandemic and build their future," Dhami said, adding Uttarakhand is the first state to introduce a scheme like this. "I am your Pushkar mama (maternal uncle)," said Dhami smilingly to kids at a function organized to launch the scheme in Dehradun

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IRS 2019 Q4 (TR)

SPOTLIGHT TEXTILES

WEAVING THE FABRIC OF PROGRESS

An IMPACT Presentation

POISED FOR

The Ministry of Textile has adopted a holistic development model supported by infrastructure and cluster development, technical textile mission, performance-linked incentives and a zero tax policy on exports to restore India's pride of place in the global textile market

India has been one of the most prominent exporting countries in textile and apparel. But its rank in apparel export registered a steady fall ever since 2008 as it faced several disadvantages such as restrictive land and labour market of the country, high power cost, difficulty in accessing credit for taking up projects resulting in operation of low and sub-optimal technology. The Ministry of Textiles has mounted all-out efforts to overcome these challenges and help India regain its historical position in textile and apparel market. It is targeting at exports worth more than USD 44 billion out of the country's total exports' target of 400 billion. The target does not seem a far cry in view of the fact that now there is a good demand for Indian textile products in the countries like USA, UK and European Union. Some of these countries that were basically sourcing from China, are now very keen to source from India. So, the Indian textile industry is poised for big growth. How did this turnaround come about?

Let's take a look some of the path-breaking initiatives of the Ministry that have scripted this phenomenal success story:

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

To put in place reasonable quality infrastructure in the quickest possible time, the Ministry has adopted the approach to set up clusters with large-scale manufacturing units across the value chain, starting from fibre to finished goods, providing economies of scale for sourcing, utility consumption, overheads, and marketing. It has resulted in production, upgradation and process changes at each stage in the textile value chain, involving players of all sizes and from all market segments. New business models are emerging on a widespread scale, resources are being used much more effectively, and renewable sources of energy and materials are being adopted.

SCHEME FOR INTEGRATED TEXTILE PARKS (SITP)

In commensurate with the government's announcement of Mega Integrated Textiles Region and Apparel Parks (MITRAs) in budget of 2021-22, the Ministry is setting up integrated textile parks to help the industry in achieving scale and reduce logistics cost.

The initiative aims to provide textile industry world-class infrastructure facilities at one place with plug and play facilities. It targets industrial clusters and locations with high growth potential for developing world class infrastructure support.

TECHNICAL TEXTILE MISSION

The mission comprises fundamental research at various fibre levels: carbon, aramid, nylon, composites, and glass fibre. Technical textiles have wide application in defence, para-military, aerospace, highways, railways, airport runway, ports, medical applications, agriculture, and water resources.

For the first time, 207 technical textiles products have been notified in Foreign Trade Policy in January 2019. As many as 92 items have been identified for mandatory use across nine ministries/departments. The mission components comprise applied research for applications, indigenous development of machineries, innovation, product development

A GIANT LEAP

and field level applications through Textiles Research Associations (TRAs).

PRODUCTION LINKED INCENTIVE SCHEME

To expand the export basket of textile products, the Government has approved a Production Linked Incentive Scheme (PIL) for MMF and technical textiles based products.

With a view to increasing investments, generating employment opportunities and boosting exports in textile sector, the scheme under implementation, provides financial assistance to a group of entrepreneurs to establish state-of-the-art infrastructure facilities in a cluster for setting up their textile units, conforming to international environmental and social standards, thereby mobilising private investment in the textile sector and generate fresh employment opportunities.

ROSCTL: A GAME CHANGER

In addition to import duties and GST which are generally refunded, there are various other taxes/duties that are levied by Central, State and Local Governments which are not refunded to exporters. These taxes and levies get embedded in the price of the ultimate product being exported, and increase the price of Indian apparel and made-ups and make it difficult for them to compete in the international market. In 2019, the Ministry of Textiles notified Rebate of State and Central Taxes and Levies (RoSCTL) scheme for export garment and made-ups segments of textile industry.

> **The RoSCTL, which has come into force from 1st January 2021 on exports of apparels/garments and made-ups, will continue till 31st March 2024. The extension of the RoSCTL for apparel/garments is expected to make textile products globally competitive by doing away with all embedded taxes/levies.**

NIFT: CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE

National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), set up in 1986 under the aegis of Ministry of Textiles, is a leader in fashion education, currently ranked at 9th number in fashion institutes around the world. Over the years, the Institute has produced illustrious alumni comprising several revered fashion designers and top industry professionals who have attained global recognition.

NIFT plans to offer courses in the field of technical textiles too.As part of the Craft Cluster intervention, about 7000 students across NIFT campuses are working in 70 craft clusters of handloom and handicrafts with over 1200 artisans each semester. NIFT has continued with its craft cluster interventions through online interactions with artisans, experts and students and virtual demonstrations by master craftsmen.

PPE: TURNING CRISIS INTO OPPORTUNITY

In March 2020 when the COVID-19 hit the world, it was very important to develop indigenous manufacturing of PPE and N-95 masks. The Ministry of Health had come out with the new specifications approved by WHO for anufacturing PPE. Since, the whole country got into the lockdown immediately, developing a PPE manufacturing industry was a huge challenge. South India Textiles Research Association (SITRA) Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu was the only NABL accredited laboratory for the testing purpose.

The Ministry set up a war room to develop new manufacturers and to handhold them continuously in the process. This was manned by Directors of the Ministry and supervised by senior officers. Since lockdown was enforced, all junior officials except few chosen ones were not attending the office. Interestingly the meeting room was far from Secretary's office and secretary had to come to the officers in control room on hourly basis for assigning new tasks and reviewing progress of earlier tasks.

He was ably assisted in this mammoth task by **Vijoy Kumar Singh, Additional Secretary,** who headed the Textiles Machinery and Technology (TM&T) Division.

The then Minister of Textiles **Smt Smriti Irani** opened her own office room for the use of the control room. So, the Project PPE war room started functioning from the chamber of the minister. Whenever required to review the progress, she used to come and sit with the secretary in his room for this purpose.

The Ministry of Health revised its requirement of PPE to two crore and the pressure was mounting and palpable everywhere. There were only few manufacturers who were able to produce only few hundreds of PPE. In this situation it was decided that Ministry of Civil Aviation should be approached on the behalf of Ministry of Textiles to operate some flight to take the sample to Coimbatore for testing. A special ATR cargo plane was used from Hyderabad to Bengaluru to take fabric to be used by large readymade garments manufacturers of Bengaluru.

Subsequently, the Ministry of Civil Aviation started few lifeline flights for moving urgent medical supplies and testing kits to various states. This information came as godsend to us. We requested Ministry of Civil Aviation to plan lifeline flights in a way to schedule a flight to Bengaluru every day. Officials of Central Silk Board were tasked for transporting samples from Bengaluru to SITRA Coimbatore by road on daily basis.

After approval of samples, it was essential to ensure availability of fabric, guide their shop floor supervisors, help them locating the seam sealing machines in Hong Kong, get them transported by special cargo flights, coordinate with the Counsel General office in Shanghai and all airlines operating their cargo flights. The Ministry had to depute one officer to each factory to assist him in getting approval from local administration and coordinate for his other logistical requirement. Slowly, the manufacturers were able to offer their products to the Hindustan Latex Ltd at open offered price and supply started. Similarly, masks manufacturer wanted to test their samples tested for N95 Masks. DRDE Gwalior, a DRDO laboratory, was contacted and they were found to have testing equipment for this purpose.

A year later, we have more than 1100 manufacturers producing PPE with capacity of producing 5 lakh per day. There are 250 N-95 manufacturers where there were only two manufacturers before the pandemic. The industry has been able to produce 6.3 crore PPE and has exported 2.2 crore out of that. India has emerged as second largest producer of PPE and a total industry worth 7000 crore has been set up in the pandemic without any subsidy involved in the process.

To conclude with the words of UP Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Textiles, "As announced in the budget, we will have seven mega textile parks, because in India the textile sector is not very integrated sector, as you have spinning one at place, weaving at other place, and processing at a third place. These mega textile parks will bring everything from fibre to the finished products at one place which will not only entail advantage of scale but it will also substantially reduce the logistic costs. And, then we have launched a technical textile mission to make our textile products very competitive."

He further elaborates, "In order to encourage exports, the government has very recently taken a decision to extend ROSCTL which will do away with embedded taxes on exports. The scheme is based on the basic principle that exports should be zero rated. We are also soon going to launch, what is called Performance Linked Incentive (PLI) or what we call it Focused Product Incentive Scheme (FPIS) for textile sector with an incentive of more than 10 thousand crore. So, basically ROACTL extension, PLI, mega textile parks and technical textile mission will enable not only increased production of textiles, but a pretty fast growth as far as our exports are concerned."

UP Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Textiles, "As announced in the budget, we will have seven mega textile parks, because in India the textile sector is not very integrated sector, as you have spinning one at place, weaving at other place, and processing at a third place. These mega textile parks will bring everything from fibre to the finished products at one place which will not only entail advantage of scale but it will also substantially reduce the logistic costs. And, then we have launched a technical textile mission to make our textile products very competitive."

National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT)

National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) is a leader in fashion education, integrating knowledge, academic freedom, and creative thinking. NIFT, set up in 1986 under the aegis of Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, is an autonomous statutory body governed by the NIFT Act 2006.

Currently, NIFT is ranked at 9th position in fashion institutes around the world. Most revered fashion designers and top industry professionals in fashion world proudly call NIFT their alma mater. To meet the new requirements of the ever-changing fashion industry NIFT-Industry-Academia interfaces throughout the course provide a cutting-edge learning experience to the students.

The academic strategy of NIFT embraces a global approach. NIFT has strategic agreements and partnerships with about 26 leading international fashion institutes & organisations that share the same academic direction, integrating NIFT students with the global mainstream of fashion. NIFT provides an excellent opportunity to its students to experience 'study abroad' options through exchange programmes. NIFT students at all campuses are encouraged to participate in international events and competitions. The students have participated in several prestigious international competitions such as Wool Mark, Design competition organized by Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology (BIFT), Beijing, Republic of China, Fashion Week 2017 Paris, Sweden India Novel Memorial Wall Painting organized by Swedish Embassy, New Zealand Runway organized by New Zealand Embassy, Red Dot Award,Wuhan International Competition, China, World of Wearable Art (WOW) Competition.

The Institute also attracts international students who come and experience its academic and cultural richness. NIFT faculty is the strategic enabler in transforming the vision of the Institute into reality.

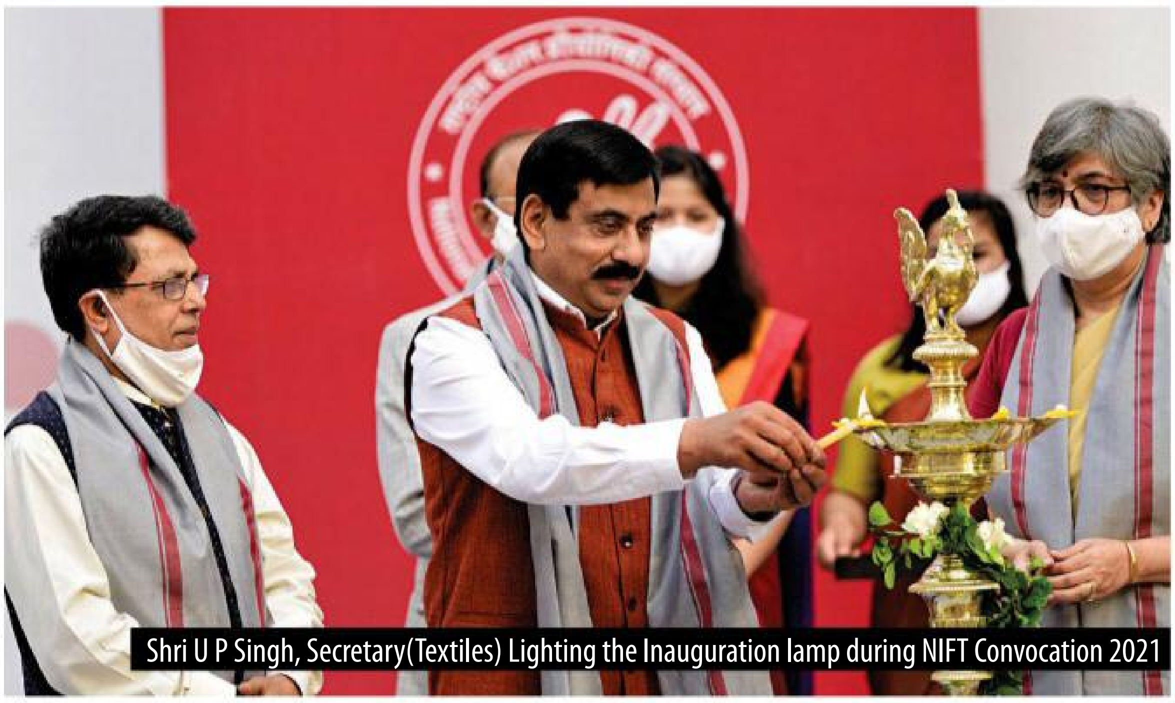
> **NIFT through its vision and conviction plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of Textile Industry in India through its academic practices encompassing knowledge, skill, and practical applications"**
>
> **Shantmanu, Director General**

Trained at some of the leading fashion institutes of international repute, the faculty brings to the classroom professional capabilities, wide exposure and years of hands-on industry experience.

In recent times NIFT has become synonymous in the field of fashion by taking up mammoth projects for the country . The Project India Size – is taken on to develop size charts for Indian body types considering the diversity, A Knowledge Portal for Textiles, Crafts & Clothing to preserve and promote Indian textiles and crafts ethnicity and geographic diversity. VisioNxt is trend insight and Fashion Forcasting lab to forecast India's fashion trends. Textile and Craft repository is being developed by NIFT as aknowledge portal for textiles, crafts & clothing to preserve and promote Indian textiles and crafts. The other prime projects being undertaken by NIFT are setting up Design Resource Centres at Weavers Service Centres for DC (Handlooms), Development of Digital Platform for Craft Based Enterprises project for Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (Meity). NIFT shall be offering courses in the field of Technical Textiles also.

As leading agents of change, over 25,500 NIFT alumni are working with the industry in key decision making positions and are instrumental in shaping the future of fashion business. NIFT alumni are also actively taking their knowledge to the grassroot levels, working towards enhancement of the craft pockets of the country.

During the current pandemic time NIFT took proactive steps to transact its curriculum completely through online mode using various platforms. Over 100 webinars have been conducted in last few months, including several with international experts. The Examination and evaluation were conducted through online platforms. The PhD defence were conducted online.



Shri U P Singh, Secretary(Textiles) Lighting the Inauguration lamp during NIFT Convocation 2021

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Admissions for year 2020 & 2021 were conducted through online mode including live counselling.

CRAFTING GROWTH TOGETHER

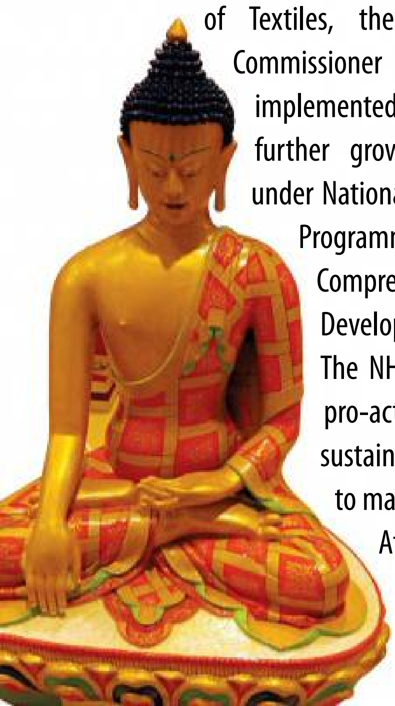
The Office of Development Commissioner for Handicrafts, under the Ministry of Textiles, is on a mission mode to bring about resurgence in the handicrafts sector while empowering artisans across the country

Playing a momentous role in India's economy, the handicrafts sector provides employment to a vast segment of craftspersons in rural & semi urban areas and generates substantial foreign exchange by way of exports for the country, while preserving its cultural heritage. The sector supports not only the existing set of millions of artisans spread over the length & breadth of the country, but also the increasingly large number of new entrants in the crafts activity. The significance of handicrafts also lies in the use of environment-friendly zero-waste practices in their production.

But the sector has also its share of problems such as low capital, inadequate exposure to new technologies, and absence of market intelligence faced by artisans. Removing all such bottlenecks, the Ministry of Textiles has catapulted the sector to a fast trajectory of product development, domestic sales and exports. It has managed to reposition handicrafts through aggregation, financial support and market access, in response to PM Modi's clarion call for 'Local Goes Global: Make in India for the World'.

In sync with the priorities and thrust of the Ministry of Textiles, the office of Development Commissioner (DC) -Handicrafts has implemented various schemes for the further growth of handicrafts sector under National Handicrafts Development Programme (NHDP) and Comprehensive Handicrafts Cluster Development Scheme (CHCDS).

The NHDP has adopted a holistic, pro-active, technology driven and sustainable development approach to make handicrafts sector viable. At the same time, CHCDS has done well to develop artisans' concentrated areas through mega clusters and special projects across the country. These areas have turned out to be highly productive centres for products, increase in production of cluster artisians, thereby substantially contributing to the export of handicrafts. Handicrafts Cottage Industries engaged itself with craft clusters in different parts of the country for providing marketing support to the product development. Cottage through its showroom across the country offers artisans and craftsmen the most viable and direct access to the markets.



With the objective to maximize the potential of handicrafts, DC (Handicrafts) has taken up a number of other initiatives, which are as follows:

Relating Textiles to Tourism

To achieve simultaneous promotion of crafts and tourism, Crafts Tourism Villages have been developed where artisans live and work with immense opportunity to sell products thereby ensuring their livelihoods. The villages comprise areas that are surrounded and connected by major tourist destinations/circuit and have a traditional art and craft heritage that attracts tourists and design innovators. All this helps in sales of their handicrafts products at work place.

Creation of Producer Companies

The Ministry has set up a network of producer companies supported by access to finance and markets. So far, 56 producer companies have been formed throughout the country to bring in professionalisation of artisian in the handicrafts sector.

Providing Direct Market Access to Weavers/ Artisans

Government e-Market Place (GeM) has initiated a process to onboarding weavers/artisans to make them sell their products directly to the ministries/ government departments. Artisan may register themselves by using their identity cards issued by the office of DC (Handicrafts), and field officials have been nominated to facilitate artisans to register on GeI portal. Training has also been imparted to these officials by GeM team to assist artisans.

E-Commerce Platform

To provide a direct marketing platform to artisans/ weavers, the Ministry of Textiles is developing an e-commerce platform through Digital India Corporation, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. In the first phase, 100 handicrafts clusters are being selected throughout the country for registration and uploading of photographs of their products on e-this commerce portal with the help of Common Service Centres (CSCs). The clusters will be mapped with nearby CSC for providing handholding support to artisans.

Thus, by harnessing a wide range of creative skills of artisans in the country, DC (Handicrafts) aims to make this sector a multi-billion-dollar marketplace with the right support and business environment. The organisation aims to promote India's craft heritage, replete with awesome regional diversity, which presents the country with a distinct edge in global markets.

DEVELOPMENT COMMISSIONER (HANDICRAFTS)
Ministry of Textiles, Government Of India

EPCH

Nurturing Handicrafts Fostering Growth

The Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH), established in the year 1986-87, has been making a seminal contribution in the promotion of the export potential of handicrafts. Significantly, the Council has created necessary infrastructure as well as marketing and information facilities, which are availed by exporters of handicrafts. The Council has 10 offices all across the country with head office at New Delhi and closely working in craft clusters like Jaipur, Jodhpur, Moradabad, Narsapur, Saharanpur and North East region to name a few.

GROWING SIZE OF THE HANDICRAFTS INDUSTRY

The exports of handicrafts for April-March of the financial year 2020-21 stood at Rs 25679 crore registering a marginal growth of 1.62 % the same period in the preceding year (2019-20). Over the last ten years, the exports of handicrafts has grown at a Compounded Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 8% from Rs. 12,975 crore in 2010-11 to Rs 25,679 crore in 2020-21.

HELPING THE SECTOR MEET GLOBAL STANDARDS

The wooden handicrafts sector faced existential crises in 2013 as due diligence certification for legality of wood used in production of wooden handicrafts was sought by European Union. The council proposed creation of the indigenous standards i.e. VRIKSH – Indian Timber Legality Assessment and Verification Scheme which is now recognised in 183 CITES signatory countries and has over 600 VRIKSH certified exporters in the country. Moving forward, keeping in view the Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) of United Nations', the VRIKSH standards have also been mapped with the SDGs.

Over the last 10 years, the EPCH has been keeping a close tab on product and design development specifically for overseas markets considering the evolving tastes and preferences of the customers. It has been helping the entrepreneurs use modern design tools, production techniques and digital marketing operations, driving growth in the sector. Further, the entrepreneurs have been exposed to various training and capacity building programmes run by the council in the areas of compliance, export procedures, product development, packaging etc. The registered exporters with the council have increased from 6000 in 2010-11 to over 10,000 in 2020-21 over the last decade.

EPCH was instrumental in launching Indian Handicrafts & Gifts Fair now known as IHGF Delhi Fair in 1994 for foreign buyers which today (more than 5 editions down the line) is the world's largest congregation of handicrafts exporters under one roof certified by Limca Book of Records organised at India's State of the art exhibition complex i.e. India Expo Centre & Mart at Greater Noida.

The EPCH has been helping exporters meet global benchmarks in terms of quality and designs retaining the inherent strength of handicrafts which depicts Indian designs, colours, motifs and patterns. For instance, the normal metallic vases being made in Moradabad has now been converted into beautiful lamp and lighting items.

In order to bridge the skill gap in the Handicrafts and Carpet Sector Handicrafts & Carpet Sector Skill Council (HCSSC) was set up to provide National Occupational Standards based skilling in the country. Centre for Handicrafts Exports Management Studies (CHEMS) was launched to ensure trained manpower and entrepreneurs for the handicrafts sector and to facilitate development of new products and new designs.

Beating the pandemic blues, the council organised the first virtual international B2B fair in June 2020 and since then 10 virtual events including 6 virtual exhibitions and 4 Buyer Seller Meets have been organised during these Covid times. The exports of handicrafts registered a growth of around 1.62% in 2020-21. It is important to note that in the first six months of 2021 there was a negative growth of (-) 23%, however the sector bounced back and registered a growth of 26% in the next six months. The EPCH is harnessing the growth potential in exports of handicrafts and the sector may grow between 15 to 20% in the next five years to double the exports from the current level of Rs 25,000 crore to cross Rs 50,000 crore.

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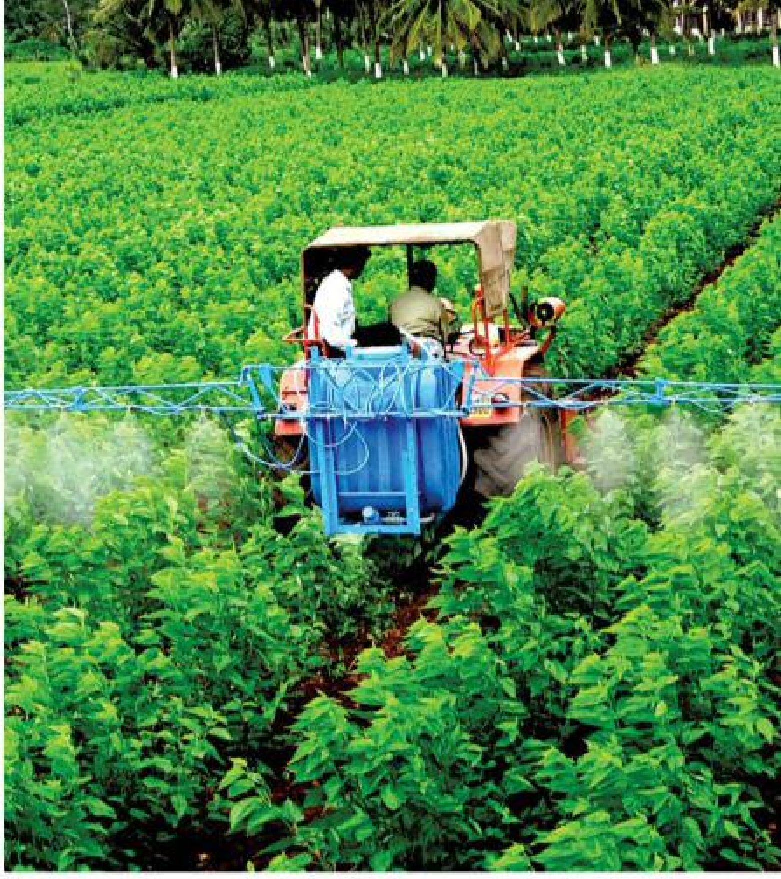


FORGING AHEAD TO BE ATMANIRBHAR IN PRODUCTION OF INTERNATIONAL QUALITY SILK

Propelled by the vision to see India emerge as the global silk leader and working tirelessly to fulfil the dream of the Hon'ble Prime Minister to make India a self-reliant nation, the Central Silk Board (CSB), a statutory body under the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, has taken a giant leap towards the production of international quality 4A Grade Bivoltine silk in the last 7 years.

DEPENDENCE ON IMPORTS

While India is the largest consumer of silk and the second largest producer of silk, for years the country has depended on imports, mainly from China, to meet its domestic demand for international quality silk yarn. The estimated demand of international quality Bivoltine raw silk in the country is about 10,000 Metric Tonnes (MT) mainly for the power looms, export market and for the warp in handlooms.

UNDERSTANDING THE SHORTCOMINGS

Initially, the production of Bivoltine silk was confined only to the temperate regions. Despite continuous efforts to increase Bivoltine silk production in the country over the years, the challenges continued to be the non-availability of Bivoltine silkworm breeds conducive to tropical conditions, poor agronomical practices for mulberry cultivation, traditional technologies followed for egg production, disinfection methods, inadequate chawki care, poor rearing conditions, improper mounting management and adoption of traditional post cocoon technology machineries and practices.

PATH BREAKING INITIATIVES

The CSB implemented various schemes, projects and programmes of the Government of India across the country focussed at increasing the scope of mulberry sericulture in general and Bivoltine sericulture in particular. In addition to that, the CSB scientists improved the host mulberry plant and developed new Bivoltine silkworm breeds which yielded desired results and dream of bivoltine silk production in tropical regions come true.

Notably, under the 'Look East Policy', the Government has focused on the promotion of sericulture in the North East Region as a major intervention to boost economy, employment, capacity building and self-reliance. Under the North East Region Textile Promotion Scheme (NERTPS), all types of silk production including Bivoltine sericulture is being promoted on a large scale in the North East states.

While all the machineries required for the silk industry were being manufactured in the country, the Automatic Reeling Machine (ARM), essential for the production of international quality 4A grade Bivoltine silk, was being imported from China. With the efforts of the R&D Institute of the CSB, the ARM technology has now been developed in the country to manufacture it domestically which is going to be a milestone turn to become Atmanirbhar in production of international grade silk.

> **“Under the 'Look East Policy', the Government has focused on the promotion of sericulture in the North East Region as a major intervention to boost economy, employment, capacity building and self-reliance.”**

All of these initiatives have already started to show positive results. During the last seven years, Bivoltine silk production has grown by 173.89% from 2559 MT to 7009 MT. Coinciding with this growth, the import of raw silk has reduced significantly from 3260 MT in 2014-15 to 1804 MT in 2020-21.

INVESTING FOR THE FUTURE

India can boast of being the only country in the world to produce all the four commercial varieties of silk – Mulberry, Eri, Tasar and Muga to the tune of 34000 MT in 2020-21.

Currently, of the 7009 MT Bivoltine silk production, about 1892 MT or about 27% is of international quality 4A grade silk. Additional efforts to increase the production of international quality 4A grade silk from 27% to 45% have been earmarked under the Silk Samagra-2, an integrated scheme for the development of the silk industry, proposed for implementation by the CSB for the next five years from 2021-22 to 2025-26. The scheme would focus on increasing the Bivoltine silk production base by increasing the host plantation area, availability of sufficient quantity of Bivoltine silkworm seed and improving efficiency and skill for the production of international grade silk in the country and also doubling the farmer's income. Once implemented, the scheme will potentially meet the existing deficit of international quality 4A grade silk and bring the import of raw silk to bare minimum making India completely Atmanirbhar in the silk sector.

Additionally, the Central Silk Board has also taken the necessary initiatives to educate the consumers about purity of silk products assured by the Silk Mark.

SILK MARK INDIA
Your Assurance of Pure Silk

My Handloom My Pride

Handloom Export Promotion Council known as HEPC under the aegis of Development Commissioner for Handlooms, Ministry of Textiles, Government of India was constituted in the year 1965 to promote export of handloom products from India. Presently HEPC has about 1500 member exporters spread across the country. The main objective of HEPC is to support Handloom exporters, mainly assisting and providing required support and guidance to the exporters for trade promotion and international marketing. HEPC has its head office at Chennai and regional office at New Delhi. HEPC has opened a liaison office at Karur, Panipat and help desk for North East at Guwahati to extend handholding support to NER and has started functioning from the campus of IIHT/ WSC Guwahati.

The major handloom export centres are Karur, Panipat, Varanasi, Kannur, etc.

The main product categories and products exported are Home Textiles (including bed linen, table linen, toilet and kitchen linen, towels, curtains, upholstery, etc.), Floor coverings (including rugs, dhurries, floor mats, bath mats, etc.), Clothing accessories (stoles, scarves, etc) and fabric (sarees, terry towels, fashion fabrics).

Handloom product exports are actively happening and has been hovering around 350 MUS$ during last 5 years with an exception during 2019-20 & 2020-21, wherein, the exports declined to 315.62 MUS$ and 22.65 MUS$ respectively due to the COVID-19 pandemic issues. India is the only country in the global trade having a sizeable quantum of exports of handwoven products despite severe competition not only from the competing countries but also from mechanised sector within the country.

Activities of HEPC

Towards the object of the Council, HEPC has, with the support of the Development Commissioner for Handlooms, initiated many new activities such as giving awards to the top most exporters, bringing out various colour catalogues synchronizing the Pantone numbers to guide the exporters in following the colour and trend patterns prevailing in overseas markets, bringing out various publications under grant from the ministry for the benefit of handloom industry. HEPC in its endeavour to promote export of handwoven products from India organises participation in around 20 international events across the globe every year. Besides, it also organises Reverse Buyer Seller Meets in India inviting Buyers from all over the world.

Due to the prevailing travel restrictions induced by the Covid-19 pandemic, many physical fairs around the world are either getting cancelled or being postponed to next edition. In order to overcome this situation, HEPC has been organising virtual events focussing different market regions. During 2021, HEPC has organised 12 virtual events targeting trade visitors of Sweden, Denmark, Italy, France, Spain, Japan, USA, Canada, Australia & New Zealand and South America. HEPC has been taking every possible steps to provide market access opportunities to its member exporters through its virtual and physical events. Of which the following events assume significance since it is organised coinciding on National Handloom Day. Coinciding National Handloom Day, Handloom Export Promotion Council under the Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India organised an exhibition titled "Celebrating MyHandloomMyPride on National Handloom Day 2021" at Moti Bagh Club House, New Delhi. The event has the participation of 22 exhibitors comprising of Padmashree Awardees, National Awardees, Cooperatives, Producer Companies andWeaver Entrepreneurs

Virtual ITSF

HEPC has also organised an exclusive virtual event to show case Traditional Textiles of India coinciding with the National Handloom Day- August 7th. This event is held for 7 days (7-13, August 2021) and has the participation of 57 exclusive handwoven manufacturers / exporters/ cooperatives/ National awardees / Clusters/ India Handloom Brand (IHB) holders from all over India. The event is organised with the grant from O/o. Development Commissioner (Handlooms), Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India

Around 220 trade visitors from our neighbouring Asian Countries such as Bangladesh, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar have registered for attending the virtual event. The response from the exhibitors and the international visitors are highly encouraging and this will certainly open the doors for Handloom fabric manufactures to International market and help in increasing the export of handwoven products to these countries

HEPC takes all possible initiatives and strives to achieve the export target set by the Hon'ble Prime Minister, and we will continue to provide our support to all handloom manufacturers to bring our product from Local to Global and "My Handloom My Pride" awareness to make it happen in the Indian and International Market.

When the World Starts Dreaming, Our Hand Starts Weaving

MANDAR DEODHAR

THE CHEF WITH *DUM*

IMTIAZ QURESHI, 90

As ITC Hotel's master chef, Imtiaz Qureshi popularised Lucknow's *dum pukht* technique. He was the first chef to be awarded a Padma Shri

BY RANVEER BRAR

As a Lucknow boy with dreams of becoming a chef, the folklore of Imtiaz Qureshi is something I grew up with. Someone would tell me they had made biryani with Chef Qureshi; another told me they had shaken his hand. In my mind, he was obviously a legend.

> He is a master artisan, and along with that he is every bit the *pahalwan*

It was around 1998-1999 that I was working as a trainee chef at the Taj Palace in Delhi. I remember once taking the Rs 612 I had earned to ITC Maurya next door and having only the Galouti Kebab at Dum Pukht. The fact that I was eating Imtiaz Qureshi's food in an ITC hotel was incidental. The sum of the man far exceeded his employment. Not just had he pulled the *dum pukht* technique out of Lucknow, he had given it personality, an unmistakable refinement. This, I feel, was a defining moment.

One sees that refinement in his personality too. He is, after all, a master artisan. Along with that, he is still every bit the *pahalwan*. He'll regale you with stories about those he beat in a *dangal*, while also telling you tales about those he fed. To sum him up, I'd say—he's like everything he cooks. ■

Ranveer Brar *is a chef, television personality, author and restaurateur*

EMANCIPATING COOKING

TARLA DALAL (1936-2013)

Tarla Dalal's cookbooks revolutionised vegetarian home-cooking in India. Starting with just one cooking class, she soon built a food empire

BY SANJEEV KAPOOR

To say that Tarla Dalal was the biggest name in home cooking is to tell only half the story. She started with just one cooking class, which became so popular that there were soon Tarla Dalal cooking classes across India. In Mumbai, foreign cuisine—otherwise only available in hotels—reached home kitchens, thanks to her. Books became her ambassadors.

A few years into my TV career, publishers began encouraging me to write a cookbook. I was puzzled. People could see me cook for free. Why would they buy my book? Someone then told me about the royalty Tarla Dalal earns in a single year. I nearly fell off my chair. I would have been delighted to earn even 20 per cent of that. In a way, I thank her for my 150 books.

Just thinking of her brings a smile to my face. I suspect this is the case for several women, too. At the time she was popular, cooking defined the lives of many women. To my mind, she emancipated them, not by teaching them how to cook, but by assuring them they could succeed. ■

Sanjeev Kapoor *is a chef, entrepreneur and television personality*

ASHESH SHAH

Father of Butter Chicken

KUNDAN LAL GUJRAL (1902-1997)

After moving from Peshawar to Delhi during Partition, Kundan Lal Gujral first set up Moti Mahal in Daryaganj. The restaurant soon revolutionised North Indian food with its novel and delectable recipes

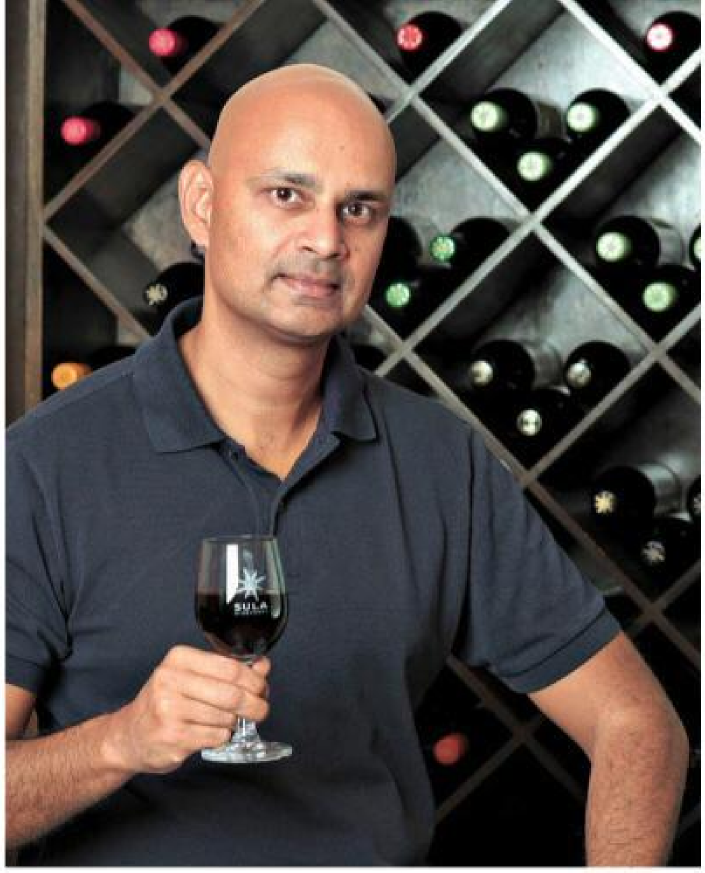
BY MANISH MEHROTRA

Jawaharlal Nehru and Raj Kapoor, would have, of course, eaten at Moti Mahal in the 1960s, but being from Patna, I first ate there only in the mid-'90s. I was a student of hotel management then, and I had enough knowledge about food to realise that I was eating in a place that had given birth to not one but three iconic dishes—butter chicken, tandoori chicken and dal *makhani*. That was definitely a high.

One cannot undermine what others have done for Indian food, but the contribution of Kundan Lal Gujral is immense. It was he who created these dishes that are famous in India as well as internationally. His recipes are just like mother recipes that have encouraged younger chefs to come up with countless more derivatives of their own. The tandoori lobster that I had once seen on the menu of a Michelin 3-star restaurant was also derived from his tandoori chicken recipe. You will find thousands of such derivatives all over the world.

Julia Child once said there can never be enough butter in a dish. Kundan Lalji's butter chicken, I feel, went further by perfecting the balance of flavours. The dish, after all, satisfies the soul. ■

Manish Mehrotra *is an award-winning chef. He started Indian Accent in 2009*


UMESH GOSWAMI

Wine Pioneer

RAJEEV SAMANT, 54

In 1997, Rajeev Samant started growing grapes in Nashik, and by 1999, Sula, the company he founded, was selling 50,000 bottles of wine. His rise shows that when you have new wine, you ditch old bottles

BY A.D. SINGH

Rajeev and I became friends soon after he returned from America. I had several doubts when he told me he was looking to get into the wine business: Would people drink wines made in India? Could one even make decent wine here? At the time, people barely drank wine, and if they did, the wine was often of poor quality.

I remember how professional Rajeev was about production—he started by bringing on board a good winemaker—but what impressed me even more was how he marketed his wine in a fashion that was both fun and international. His exposure and personality helped him connect with young people very quickly. Suddenly, wine was relevant and cool. Seeing how interested people had become, we even started a wine club at Olive. I give credit to Rajeev for pioneering and driving that lifestyle revolution.

Since wine, in the end, is fruit juice, drinking it is socially acceptable across the globe. In some parts of the world, they drink it like water. There are no taboos that surround it. Rajeev, in effect, first helped make wine drinking more harmless in India, and then also helped remove taboos around drinking itself. Crucially, he didn't lose sight of quality while changing people's minds. No wonder that Sula is now sold abroad, too. ■

A.D. Singh *is founder and managing director of the Olive group of restaurants*

MADE IN INDIA

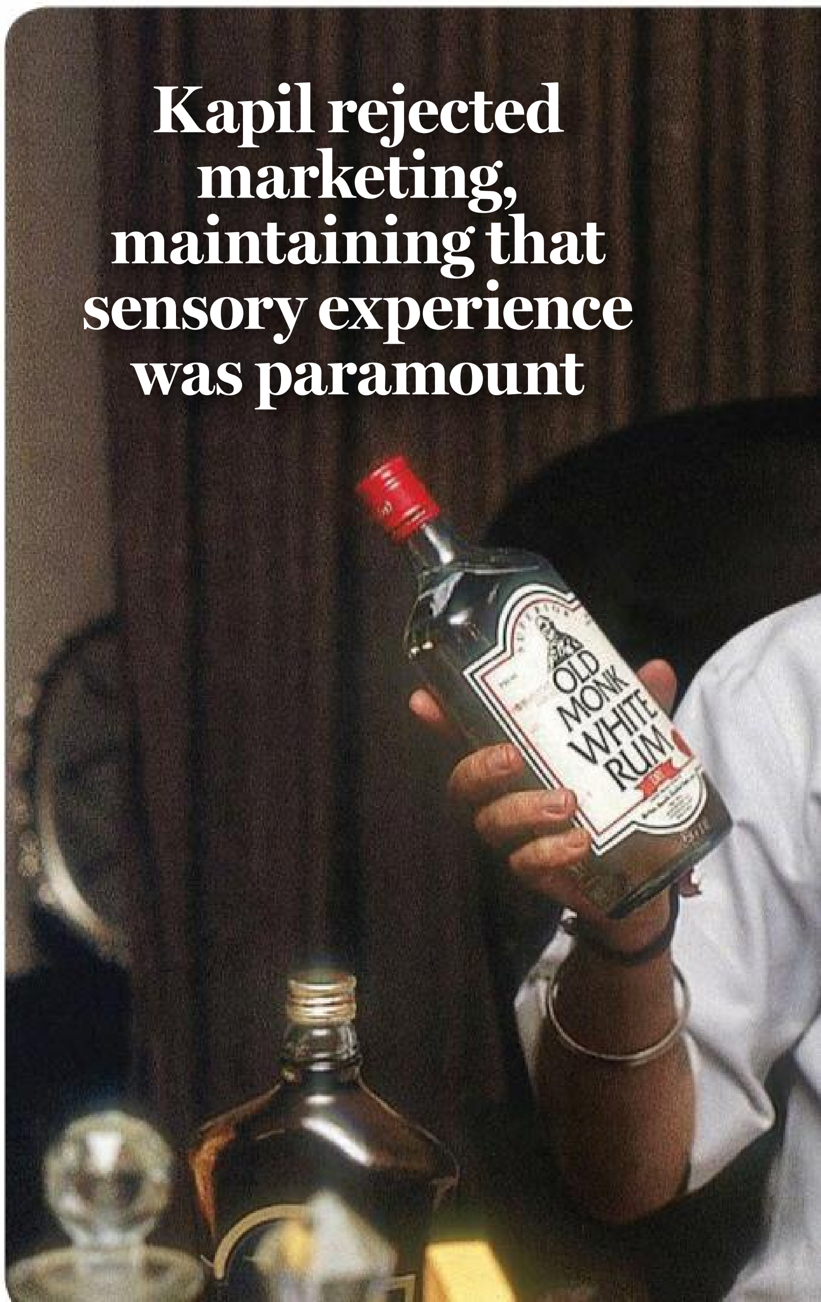
KAPIL MOHAN (1929 -2018)

The Padma Shri awardee was responsible for iconic Indian alcohol brands like Old Monk

BY DESMOND NAZARETH

Since 2010 or so, we have seen an unexpected burst of innovation in the Indian alcobev [alcoholic beverage] scenario, with 'Made in India' products getting considerable global media attention. Witness the entry of world-class single malts by relatively big Indian players, Indian wines, some craft and uniquely Indian heritage spirits and liqueurs, a host of gins and a few rum and vodka-related products.

Through the 20th century, most Indian alcohol companies produced mass-market products which have been categorised as Indian Made Foreign

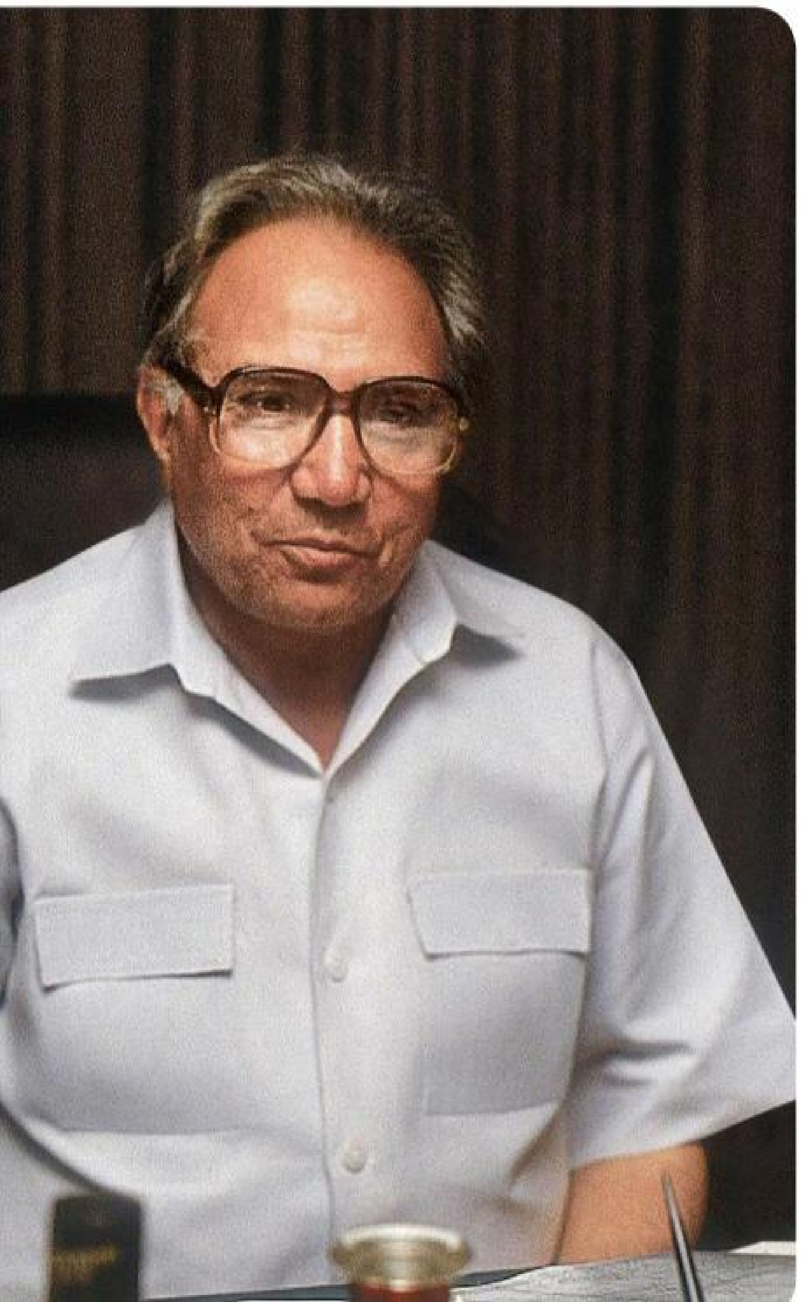


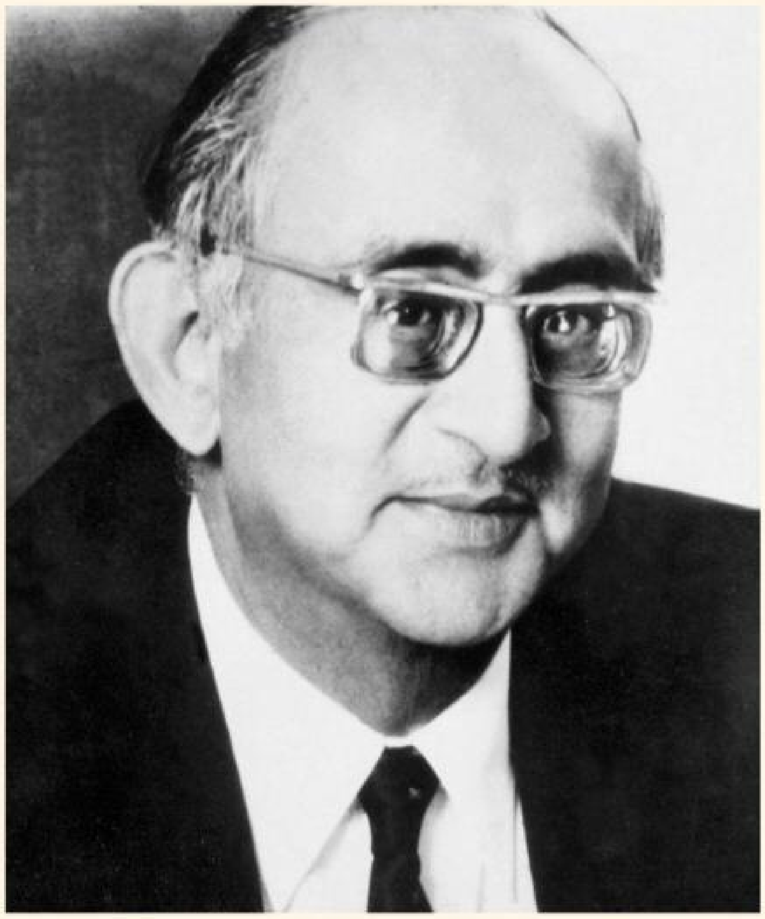
Kapil rejected marketing, maintaining that sensory experience was paramount

Liquor (IMFL). In this context, one would like to remember Indian alcobev pioneers of yesteryear, whose contributions may have been overlooked. Among just a handful, Padma Shri Kapil Mohan stands out, with his success in building up iconic Indian brands like Old Monk rum, Solan No. 1 whisky and Golden Eagle beer.

Kapil was an ex-army virtual teetotaler who ran the family-controlled Mohan Meakin parent firm for around 40 years. He resolutely rejected marketing and surrogate advertising of his products, maintaining that sensory experience is paramount. The company did not grow the brands beyond a point and they lost market share. Old Monk sales plummeted in comparison to the highs of the 1970s, but by that time, it already had a cult following that persists till today. Kapil has been credited with modernising his manufacturing plants and is acknowledged by ex-employees for his low-key, humane and inclusive management style. In the cut-throat alcobev world, Kapil's achievements should be held in high regard. ■

Desmond Nazareth *is the founder and managing director of Agave India*


YASBANT NEGI


INDIAN EXPRESS

Shrewd Strategist

VITTAL MALLYA (1924-1983)

At the time of his untimely passing, he was one of India's four leading business barons

BY KIRAN MAZUMDAR-SHAW

Vittal Mallya made his fortune by creating a diversified business conglomerate largely anchored by his beer and spirits businesses. I had the privilege of knowing him from my childhood, as my late father was MD of United Breweries (UB) even before Mallya acquired the business. He expanded his empire with companies like Kissan, Berger Paints, Hindustan Polymers and Mangalore Fertilisers. He was also the largest shareholder in Cadbury India, Hoechst Pharma, Bayer India and Singer. His business was valued at over Rs 500 crore by 1980, which made him one of India's four leading business barons, alongside Dhirubhai Ambani, Ratan Tata and Aditya Birla.

Vittal Mallya was a shrewd strategist, able to turn sick companies into profitable enterprises. At the time of his untimely death in 1983, his empire encompassed 30 breweries and 11 distilleries. He created several brands like Kingfisher lager, McDowells whisky and Blue Riband gin.

On the personal front, he was reclusive and frugal. He drove an old Fiat to work whilst his father was chauffeur-driven in a large Daimler. He was a risk-taker who will be remembered for putting Bengaluru on the world map as the HQ of the UB Group. ■

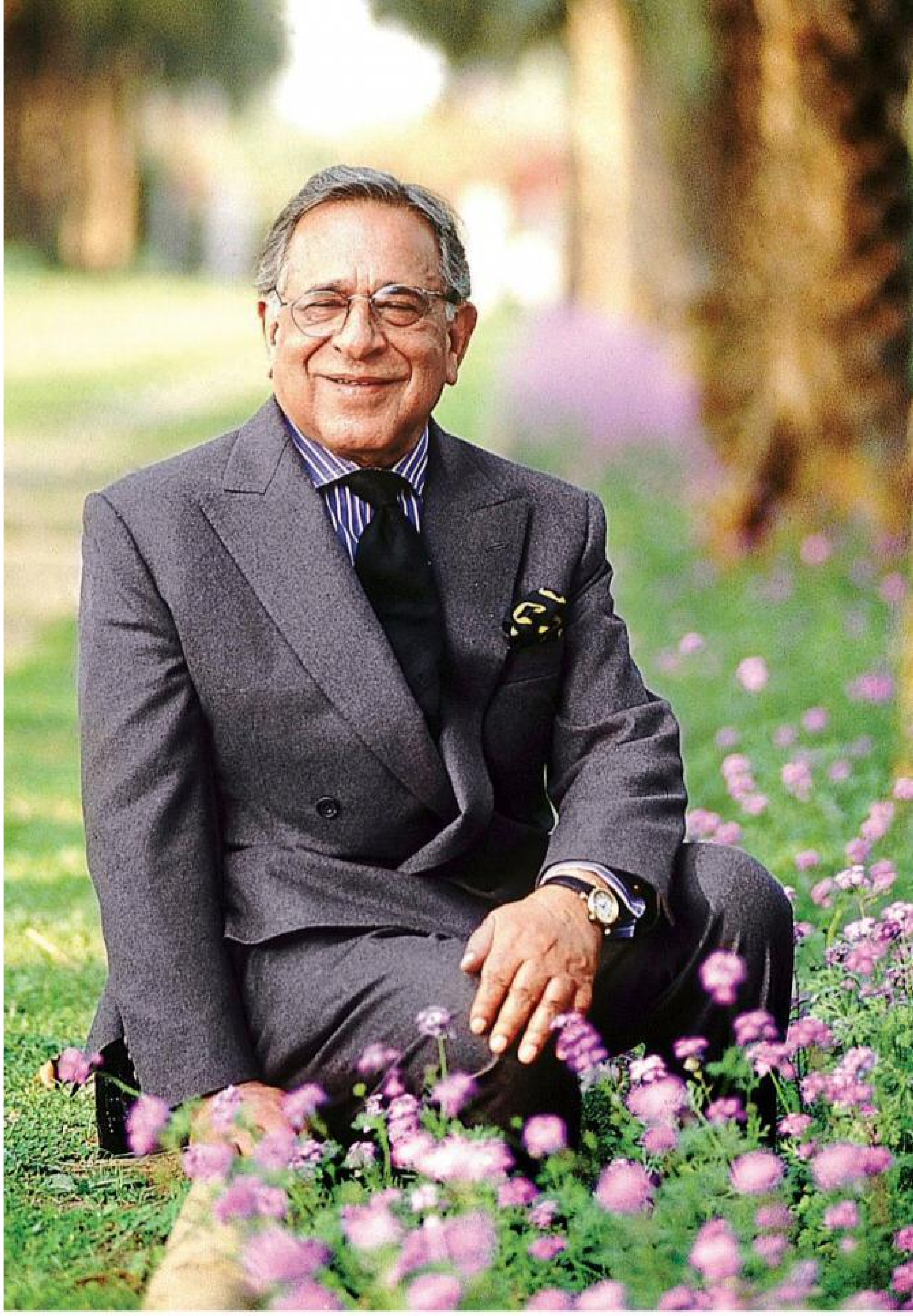
Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw *is executive chairperson, Biocon and Biocon Biologics*

ENTREPRENEUR OF STYLE

BIKKI OBEROI, 91

Over his long career, Prithvi Raj Singh 'Bikki' Oberoi, the chairman of EIH, the flagship of the Oberoi Group, made his name synonymous with luxury

BY AMAN NATH



SAIBAL DAS

Once upon a time, Oberoi was just a Punjabi name, like Khanna, Arora, Batra or Puri. Enter the big-little Bikki Oberoi, Napoleon and Onassis all rolled into one legend of admirable enterprise and style.

I first met Bikki and his wife Goodie, just out of college. They were making the scene at the Oberoi Farm in Brijbasan. I had made my maiden trip abroad and returned to see that the charmed circle of Bikki was all busy being somebody else—surely not Indian.

In the 1980s, my Nizamuddin apartment appeared in the British *House & Garden* along with Bikki's farm and Rashtrapati Bhavan. Bikki was intrigued. Although he never came home, he visited a Haryana *haveli* which had been restored from a ruin. He was so impressed that he immediately wanted to buy one. A date was set to meet at the Sohna roundabout, but the impossible royalist turned up in a long black limo with two liveried men, one holding a tortoise shell box with his cigars. I told him there was no way we would get a sensible price if we arrived like mafiosos. So he agreed to come in my Gypsy, bumping along on a dust road, holding his seat tight with both hands. "You'll kill me," he kept shouting.

I saw a lot of Bikki when he was looking for a great 3-star partner to spread his brand into India. Francis Wacziarg, my partner, represented the French Accor group with some 2,000 hotels under their brands. Later in France, at the weekend home of the Accor chairman in the Foret de Fontainebleau, I heard him complain in French that the Oberois had returned their papers. He was unhappy and his Oberoi spell was gone. We stayed in Marseille in the best penthouse suite of the Sofitel and I found it rather plain. The Oberoi was already way ahead, but what they did with the thrift of the Accor technology in their Trident brand was admirable. I love to stay at the Tridents with their understated style.

Bikki's employees both admire and fear him—but that's him, a demanding employer

Bikki's employees admire and fear him too. He can be very brusque—but that's him, a demanding employer: Prithvi Raj Singh, literally 'lion and ruler of the earth'. But he will never be faulted for not laying out his wide-eyed dreams, larger than life. ■

***Aman Nath** is a founder and chairman of the Neemrana hotel group, a founding member of INTACH and a prolific author*

ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

THE CONSCIENCE KEEPER

MOTHER TERESA (1910-1997)

During her lifetime, Mother Teresa established a multinational order of compassion, setting up hospices, leprosy homes and feeding centres for the needy

BY NAVIN B. CHAWLA

In 1948, a 38-year-old Albanian nun stepped out from the security of the Loreto convent into the streets of Calcutta. She had no money and no companion, only an abundance of faith. Everywhere was destitution and misery, victims of the Partition and famine. When a hospital refused to admit a dying man, she started a small shelter for the destitute. She needed food and medicines for them, so she begged on the streets. In my 23-year association with her, she often told me that the greatest fear she overcame was that of humiliation. She took one small step at a time.

By the time she died in 1997, she had created a multinational order of compassion comprising hospices, leprosy homes, feeding centres and *shishu bhawans* for her special constituency of the homeless, hungry, dying and the destitute in 123 countries. She had 5,000 sisters in her Order and millions of ordinary volunteers. For her, each person she reached out to was God in human form, irrespective of their faith or lack of it. The world would soon lavish her with recognition and awards; she was invariably received in the halls of power. But she was happiest in the meaner streets and slums of the world. In the process, she had become the world's conscience-keeper. ■

> **She begged on the streets to buy food and medicines for the needy... she often told me that the greatest fear she overcame was that of humiliation**

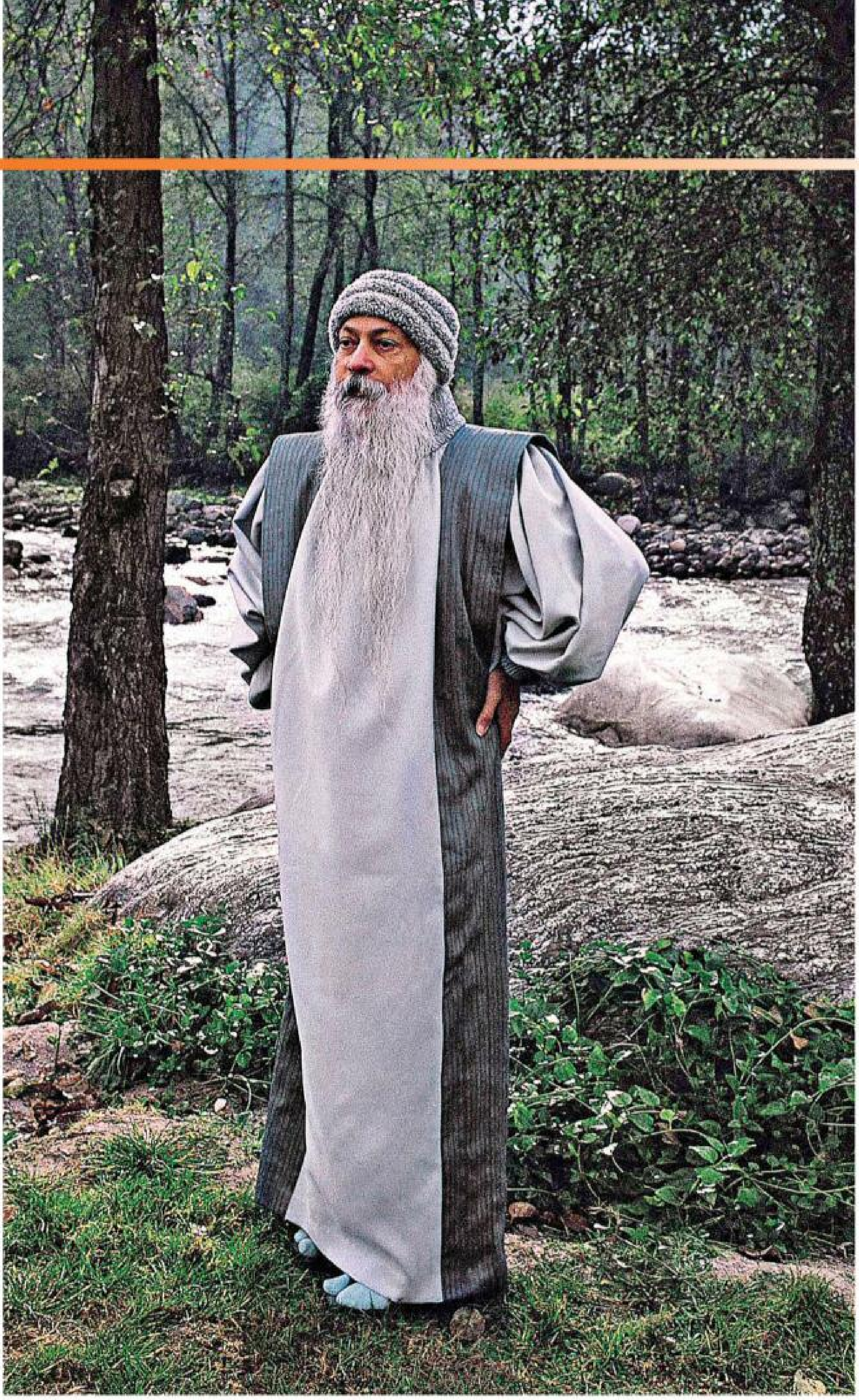
Navin B. Chawla *is a retired IAS officer, former Chief Election Commissioner of India and the biographer of Mother Teresa*

THE TABOO BREAKER

OSHO (1931-1990)

During his lifetime, he was known by many names–Rajneesh, Bhagwan, Osho–but what made this spiritual leader truly popular was his unorthodox attitude and, of course, his love for those Rolls Royces

BY MA ANAND SHEELA



INDIA TODAY ARCHIVES

When Bhagwan was in front of me, nothing else existed. I saw only his eyes, his hands, his face. I had never seen such grace before, and my eyes can still only see that in him. I think it's a shame that some only regard him as a 'sex guru'. He was a man who understood sex and sexuality, yes, but what he was asking for was the world to give up its taboos. Bhagwan was a provoker. He wanted us to come out of our belief system and look at something different. He used to say that people would only come out and look at the moon he was pointing to if he was able to convince them that their house was on fire.

People, both in India and the West, were fed up of their normal lifestyles in the '60s and '70s. They were searching for philosophies that were more relevant, something they could find themselves in. Bhagwan's teachings—of love, life, laughter and acceptance—appealed to all of us who were young at the time. Being able to work with him, to love him, was like hitting the jackpot. A lot gets said about his excess, about what he did, but that was his responsibility. What I learnt from him was mine. ■

> It's a shame that some regard Bhagwan only as a 'sex guru'... what he was asking for was the world to give up its taboos

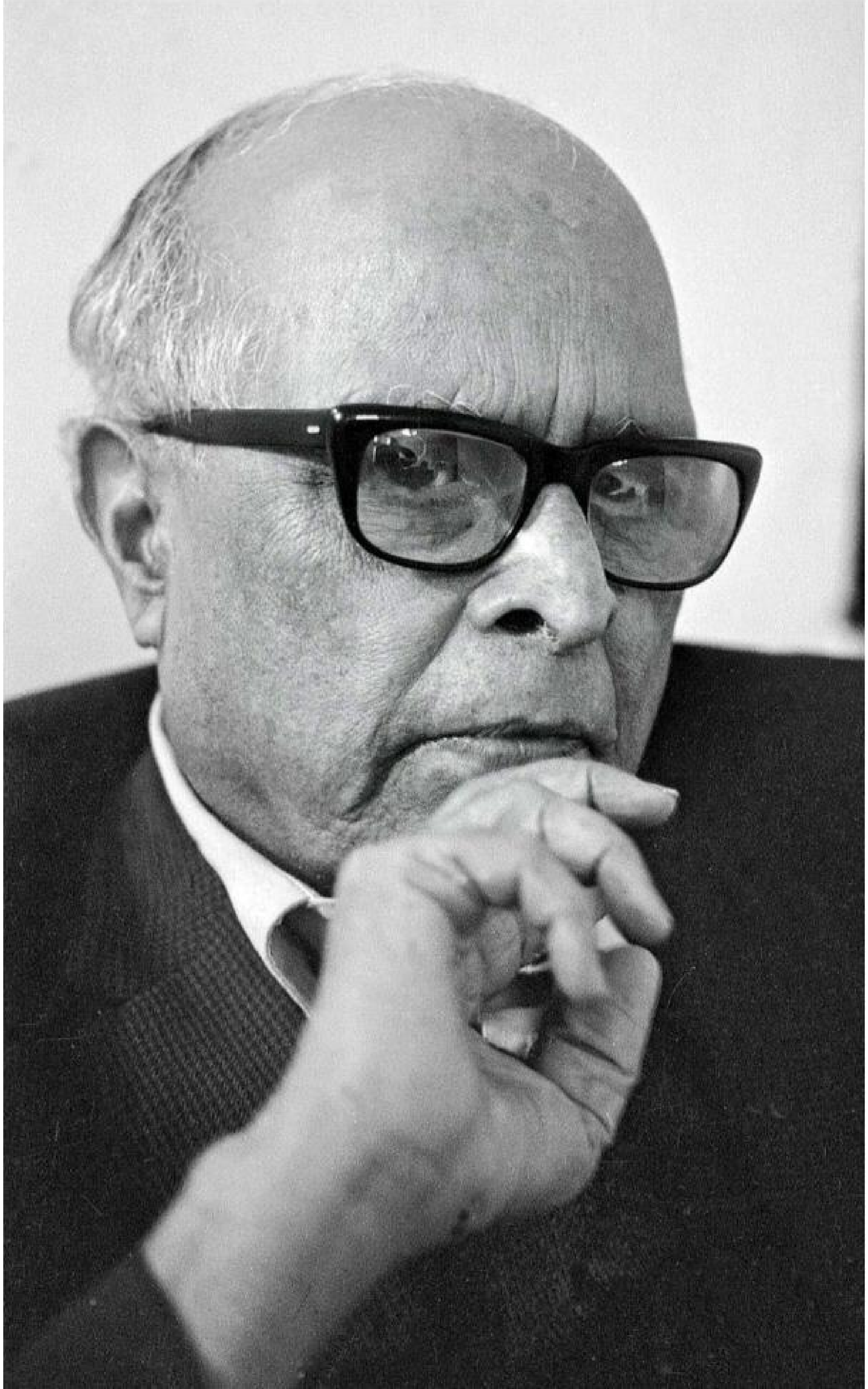
Ma Anand Sheela *was Osho's personal assistant and the spokesperson of the Rajneesh movement*

CONSUMMATE STORYTELLER

R.K. NARAYAN (1906-2001)

An early pioneer of the Indian novel in English, R. K. Narayan gave post-1947 India a narrative with classics such as *The Guide*. Importantly, perhaps, he gave the country an imagined idyll with Malgudi

BY PERUMAL MURUGAN



BHAWAN SINGH

I was studying in Class VIII at that time. My English textbook included R.K. Narayan's *Engine Trouble*. I remember us laughing out loud when our teacher explained the story. It was then that I developed a great fascination towards R.K. Narayan. He egged me on to search for short stories.

A few years later, I saw our public library was throwing away unwanted books. I dug into the mound of old books and found a translated copy of *Swami and Friends*. Penned in 1935, this was R.K. Narayan's first novel. I never forgot the children's world that the novel depicted, nor did I stop comparing their world with mine. At some point, I started wanting to author a novel that would depict my world, too. I felt strongly that I ought to write a novel keeping agricultural land as a central character—the fields in which I played as a child. This is how my novel *Koolamathari* was born.

> **I never forgot the world R.K. Narayan depicted in *Swami and Friends*... eventually, it made me want to author a novel depicting my world**

The world knows that R.K. Narayan hailed from Tamil Nadu, but when I came to know that he came from Rasipuram (denoted by the 'R' in R.K. Narayan), a town located in Namakkal, my native district, my joy knew no bounds. I felt ecstatic and proud about the fact that it was an author from my native place who had provided me the impetus to write. ■

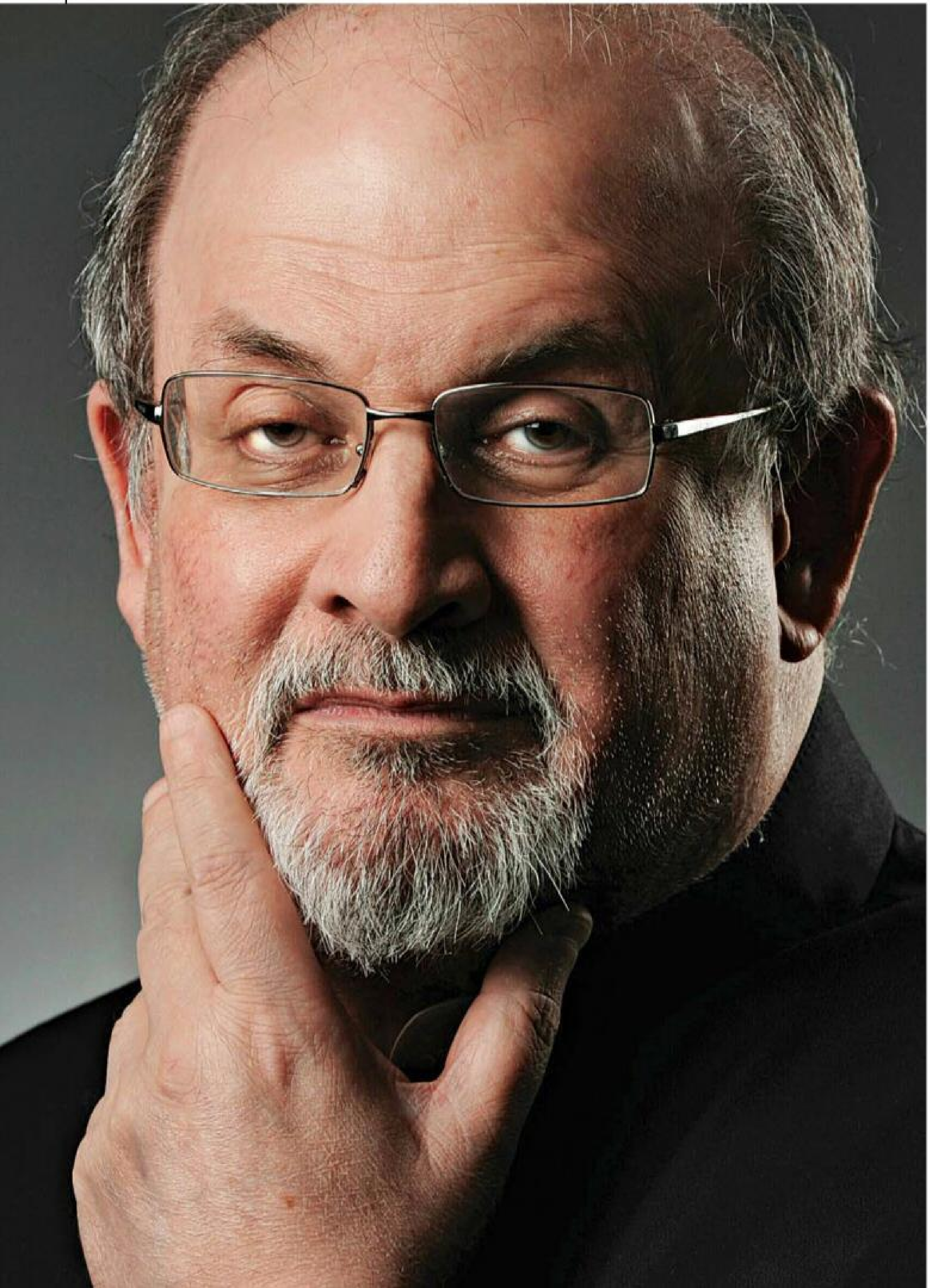
Perumal Murugan *is a Tamil-language novelist and scholar*

His Own Idiom

SALMAN RUSHDIE, 74

The fatwa that Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini issued against Salman Rushdie in 1989 might have put into focus the author's politics, but it is the prose of his books like *Midnight's Children* that still delights

BY JEET THAYIL



T NARAYAN

Today's readers of *Midnight's Children* may be unaware of the novel's revelatory arrival in 1981. I was a student at Wilson College, Bombay, the city in which the book was mostly set. The Wilson campus, designed in the style that may accurately be called Indian Gothic, stood at the very edge of the Arabian Sea. In the early 1980s, Indian students enrolled in economics and commerce courses. The English-speaking scions of the urban middle class shared an ambition with regional language students from small towns and villages: to win the jobs that would make them part of the new India.

I was the only student in the English literature course and I would be the only student for the three years it took to complete the degree. *Midnight's Children* was the kind of book friends lent each other at the time, which is how I received a copy. There was no writing like it, other than *All About H. Haterr* and the poems of the Bombay School. I'm thinking of a kind of playfulness with Indian English, an inventiveness that surpassed mere fluency and pointed at new possibilities for writing from the subcontinent. I remember asking myself again and again: You can do that? As we know, the answer is always yes. ■

***Jeet Thayil** is a poet, musician and novelist. His novel* Narcopolis *was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize in 2012*

BANDEEP SINGH

THE PIED PIPER

USTAD BISMILLAH KHAN (1916-2006)

Shehnai maestro Ustad Bismillah Khan not only freed the wind instrument from the confines of an Indian wedding, but popularised it at a global level

BY GAURAV MAZUMDAR

On August 15, 1947, as India took its first steps as an independent nation, the sweet notes from Ustad Bismillah Khan's shehnai filled the Red Fort as the country celebrated its freedom. The shehnai maestro had chosen to stay in India instead of making his way to Pakistan. Ustad Bismillah Khan was a pathbreaking musician who not only brought the shehnai to the forefront, but also embodied the philosophy of oneness. He was a practising devout Muslim, who gave equal respect to other religions and beliefs. A man known for his high morals, simplicity and strength of character, Khan won over the world with sheer charm and magical performances.

> **Be it classical, light music or cinema, Ustad Bismillah Khan was at ease with any genre of music and equally appreciated all**

He lived in Varanasi in the same house for decades and, until his death, continued to support his large family through his music. Be it classical, light music or cinema, the maestro was at ease with any genre of music and equally appreciated all. But, more significantly, he blended his shehnai beautifully with all of them. ■

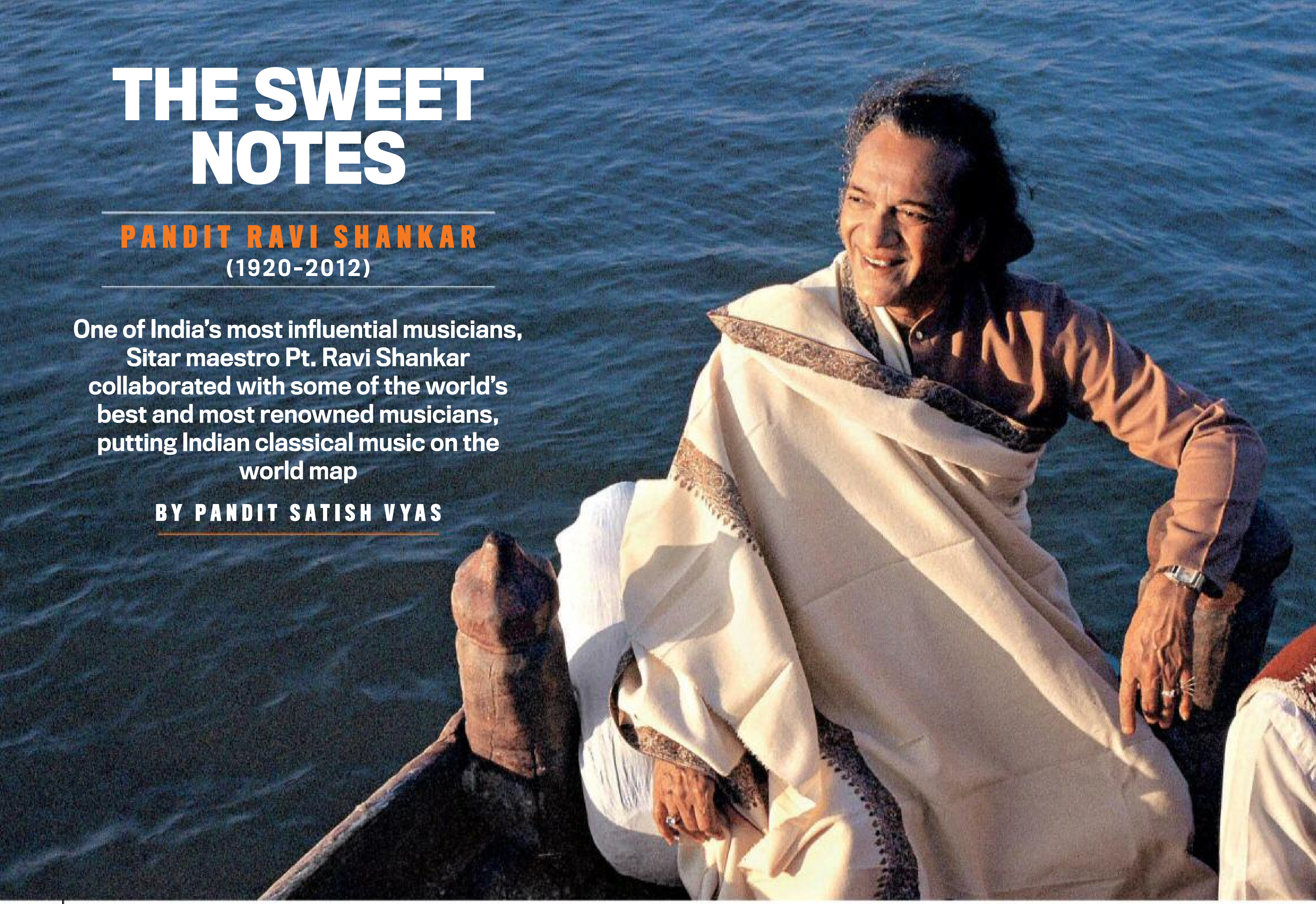
Gaurav Mazumdar *is a sitarist and a Grammy nominee*

THE SWEET NOTES

PANDIT RAVI SHANKAR
(1920-2012)

One of India's most influential musicians, Sitar maestro Pt. Ravi Shankar collaborated with some of the world's best and most renowned musicians, putting Indian classical music on the world map

BY PANDIT SATISH VYAS



INDIA TODAY ARCHIVES

Bharat Ratna Pandit Ravi Shankar is an institution in himself. He was a legendary maestro, but throughout his lifetime, he continued to have the curiosity of a student. He studied music from Ustad Allauddin Khan of the Maihar Gharana, which is also where he went and lived and got great *taleem* from his guru. His distinct way of thinking and interpreting is his hallmark as a musician. He never compromised on the purity of the raga, always keeping it intact while bringing in his own touch, even while collaborating with other world musicians. He had an uncanny command over music and maintained the *ranjakta*, or sweetness, of music. I can confidently say that in the 1960s and 1970s, he single-handedly popularised Indian classical music across the globe. When I started travelling abroad in the 1980s for my own concerts, I saw that lot of people found it difficult to locate India on the map but still knew Pandit Ravi Shankar.

> **Pt. Ravi Shankar never compromised on the purity of the raga; always keeping it intact while bringing in his own touch**

I had the privilege of knowing him since 1980 and have some beautiful memories. I recall an incident from 1997 when he performed two concerts on the same day at the same auditorium in Los Angeles. The auditorium had a capacity of 3,000 and yet was bursting at the seams during both concerts. Panditji loved me like a son and in 2004, when I was on a tour of the US with my wife Rekha, he invited us to his house to celebrate our silver wedding anniversary and made the day very special. His wife Sukanyaji prepared a delicious meal and both she and Panditji even sang a celebratory song for us. There are so many of his concerts that are etched in my mind forever, but an unforgettable memory that still lingers on in my heart is his performance at the 25th anniversary of our Gunidas Sangeet Sammelan in 2001.

He has done some fabulous collaborations with geniuses such as Yehudi Menuhin, Zubin Mehta and George Harrison. As a guru, Panditji was generous and groomed not just his daughter Anoushka to carry on his legacy but also musicians such as Vishwa Mohan Bhatt, Gaurav Mazumdar and Shubhendra Rao, among others. He showered love on his disciples and helped them build their careers. Panditji was a phenomenal persona. ■

Pandit Satish Vyas *is a santoor player and a Padma Shri awardee*

Divine Singer

M.S. SUBBULAKSHMI (1916-2004)

Jawaharlal Nehru called her the "queen of music" and Sarojini Naidu referred to her as the "nightingale of India". From film to fashion, this Bharat Ratna-awardee bettered every aspect of India's cultural life

BY BEGUM PARWEEN SULTANA

I first met M.S. Subbulakshmi some 30 years ago. I was performing to a packed house in Madras, and I had no idea she was sitting in the front row. Even though she was nearly 80 and would find it hard to walk, I remember her coming to my green room with her husband. She hugged me as soon as she saw me. Subbulakshmiji didn't speak much English but she kept using the words "wonder" and "wonderful" to describe my performance. I had tears in my eyes. It felt like I was meeting my mother.

Subbulakshmiji and I would sometimes meet in Puttaparthi. We were both devotees of Sathya Sai Baba. Only because I once said I liked her *laddoos* and *barfis*, she would bring me a tiffin of them each time we met. Baba once asked my husband, Ustad Dilshad Khan, to compose four Meera bhajans for her. She wasn't confident of her Hindi pronunciation, but she sang so well, all of India was mesmerised.

HK RAJASHEKAR

When someone photographs well, we say they are camera-friendly. Similarly, the microphone loved Subbulakshmiji. She was gifted with a voice so melodious that even inanimate gadgets seemed to come alive when they heard it. Her disposition was as disarming as her singing. She wouldn't think twice before praising me or Lata Mangeshkar. She can only be compared to a goddess, Ma Saraswati. ■

Begum Parween Sultana *is a Hindustani classical vocalist and a Padma Bhushan awardee*

ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

League of His Own

PANDIT BHIMSEN JOSHI (1922–2011)

Few Hindustani classical vocalists pack auditoriums like Pt. Bhimsen Joshi did. While his *khyal gayaki* left us in raptures, the Bharat Ratna-awardee brought India together with '*Mile sur mera tumhara*'

BY SHUBHA MUDGAL

Pandit Bhimsen Joshi's unique style, voice and mannerisms continue to be replicated by scores of male vocalists across India. His audio and video recordings attract millions of views in a social media-dominated world, one which he did not inhabit in his lifetime. Awards, festivals, chairs at educational institutions have been instituted to honour his brilliance and individuality. In his lifetime, his following was unmatched, with legions of admirers spontaneously rising to their feet and applauding thunderously as he made a token appearance in his car at Pune's Sawai Gandharva festival in his twilight years.

And yet, the legacy of the Bharat Ratna faces the same uncertain fate as that of many other mavericks. Those following his style often remain poor, or, at best, competent imitators of an individuality that cannot possibly be replicated. His worshippers often give in to unquestioning nostalgia and accept the replicas. In doing so, they fail to provide the *mahaul* and reassurance that could nurture individuality such as that of the maestro, who proved beyond doubt that it is possible to remain loyal to *gharana* traditions and yet find one's own voice. His legacy, in fact, is a reminder of this often-neglected fact. ■

Shubha Mudgal *is a Hindustani classical vocalist and a Padma Shri awardee*

AN UNFORGETTABLE VOICE

M. BALAMURALIKRISHNA
(1930–2016)

Only eight when he sang live for the first time, M. Balamuralikrishna went on to perform over 25,000 concerts. Always open to experimentation, he made Carnatic music accessible to pan-Indian audiences

BY ARUNA SAIRAM

INDIAN EXPRESS

Growing up in Bombay, I would attend concerts of all the great Carnatic maestros in the city, but there was one, in particular, I remember vividly. Balamurali Sir must have sung for three hours that day, and even though I was only a child then and I had no idea of what he was really doing, I felt I was on a high for all that time. He did the most difficult things with an absolute effortlessness. His voice was perfectly rounded, grounded in every octave. He made you appreciate his music and also his silences.

Even though ours was not technically a *guru-shishya* relationship, I revered him as a guru and he looked at me with a sense of *vatsalyam*, a parental affection. Sir never let compulsions of 'image'—what a Carnatic musician should or shouldn't be—define him or his work. Almost all the film songs he sang, for instance, are unforgettable. He always felt that Carnatic music should go places, that it should never just be the preserve of a few. Whenever someone asked him, "How is it that you can do all this with your music?", he had only one humble answer to give: "I did not find music. Music found me." ■

***Aruna Sairam** is a Carnatic vocalist, composer and a Padma Shri awardee*

A Rebel With a Cause

PANDIT KUMAR GANDHARVA (1924-1992)

Pt. Kumar Gandharva broke the tradition of gharana music to develop his own individual style

BY PANDIT VISHWA MOHAN BHATT

There are some musicians who are born once in a century. Pt. Kumar Gandharva was one such pathbreaker. Kumarji was a child prodigy, trained by the well-known Guru B.R. Deodhar, and broke the tradition of gharana music to develop his own individual style and idiom. Having recovered from Tuberculosis at a young age, he sprung back with even more energy and new musical thoughts.

He was a rebel of sorts who experimented with folk and bhajans. His innovativeness and unorthodox inter-

Ambassador of Indian Music

USTAD ALLA RAKHA
(1919-2000)

Known to his disciples as 'Abbaji', the ever-fatherly Ustad Alla Rakha was loved for both his generosity and musicianship. He gave the tabla–once only 'an accompanist's instrument'–its pride and its place

BY RANJIT BAROT

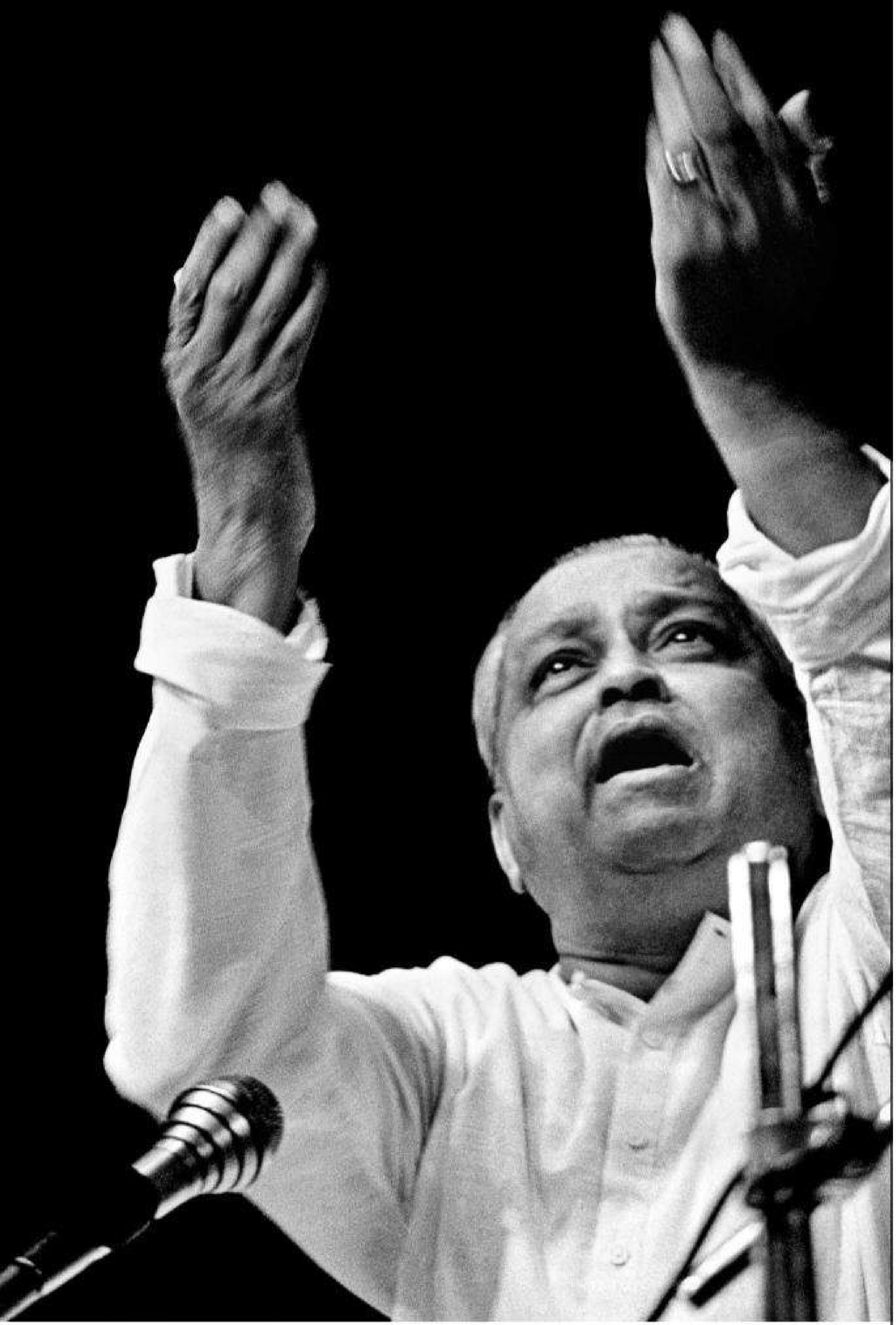
pretation of ragas invited criticism, but that didn't stop him from creating new ragas in Hindustani Classical music. Unlike other musicians, he could mesmerise you in just 15 minutes with his compositions.

Kumarji's voice was unique, captivating and redefined the approach to the traditional presentation of a raga. His art of presentation and imagination of a raga was unprecedented—his interpretation of each musical note was an eye-opener for the audience. Listen to his *bhajans* and folk melodies; they will haunt you for life. In fact, he curated and planned his own concerts meticulously.

Kumarji's thematic concert presentations—Geet Varsha, Ritu Raj, Geet Hemant—were a departure from the set norms of compositions. They were influenced by the folk music of the Malwa region. The rustic resonance and sensitivity of tone and the timbre in his voice are what made him a brilliant enchanter.

Kumarji was a free bird who couldn't be caged. Like every genius, he wanted to sing freely. He was beyond gharanas. He created his own gharana. He followed his own musical convictions. A rebel with a cause. ■

Pt. Vishwa Mohan Bhatt *is a mohan veena maestro, Padma Bhushan awardee and Grammy Award winner*



ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

INDIAN EXPRESS

My mother, Sitara Devi, was very close to Abbaji, and he would often come to our house. If you spent some time with him, you'd come away feeling you were in the presence of a saint. He was always smiling, always generous with knowledge and wisdom. I'd say he first influenced me as a human being.

I took some tabla lessons with him, but he realised very quickly that my heart was in the drum set. I remember him telling me, "You don't need to play the tabla if you like to play the drums." He explained to me some rhythmic concepts that are universal. He opened my mind up to possibility. Abbaji, I saw, never created boundaries between gharanas either. For him, all tributaries led to a single river—music.

He and Pandit Ravi Shankarji were the first big Indian music ambassadors to the rest of the world. They shed a big light on India from the outside. When travelling through America and Europe, they were at the height of their powers. He gave global musicians and percussionists a glimpse of how the Indian rhythmic system works, and how it can be applied. His impact and influence cannot be measured. ■

Ranjit Barot *is a composer, drummer and singer*

Exceptional Versatility

RUKMINI DEVI ARUNDALE
(1904-1986)

While revolutionising Bharatanatyam, Rukmini Devi also mounted a few other revolutions, fighting for animal rights, popularising Indian handloom and influencing the country's education system

BY LEELA SAMSON

Rukmini Neelakanta Shastry was born in 1904 in Madurai, the sixth child in a family of eight children. As a young girl, she was dreamy, but by the age of 16, she was resolute in marrying an Englishman—an educationist and theosophist of some standing. She broke the barrier of caste discrimination by learning the art of 'sadir', now called Bharatanatyam. She went on to revolutionise the art form while making it available to people of all castes, religious dispositions and nationalities.

Along with her husband, she started the Besant School in Adyar, in memory of their guru Dr Annie Besant, and an International Centre for Arts, renamed Kalakshetra, in sylvan surroundings. She also headed the International Vegetarian Congress and the National and International Animal Welfare Boards at a time when it was not fashionable to be a vegetarian, nor to be a spokesperson for humane conditions in abattoirs and experimental laboratories around the world. The Animal Welfare Bill in India was passed in Parliament in 1960 thanks to her relentless efforts for over six years. She was in favour of Indians wearing handloom garments and became its biggest votary. Plus, what she wore soon became a fashion statement for women and men across the country.

Her husband, George Arundale, and she, invited Madame Maria Montessori to India in 1939. The Montessori movement spread in India because of their foresight. She was a member of the committee for the rehabilitation of Tibetans in India and worked closely with the Dalai Lama on his arrival in India in 1959. ■

***Leela Samson** is a world-renowned Bharatanatyam dancer*

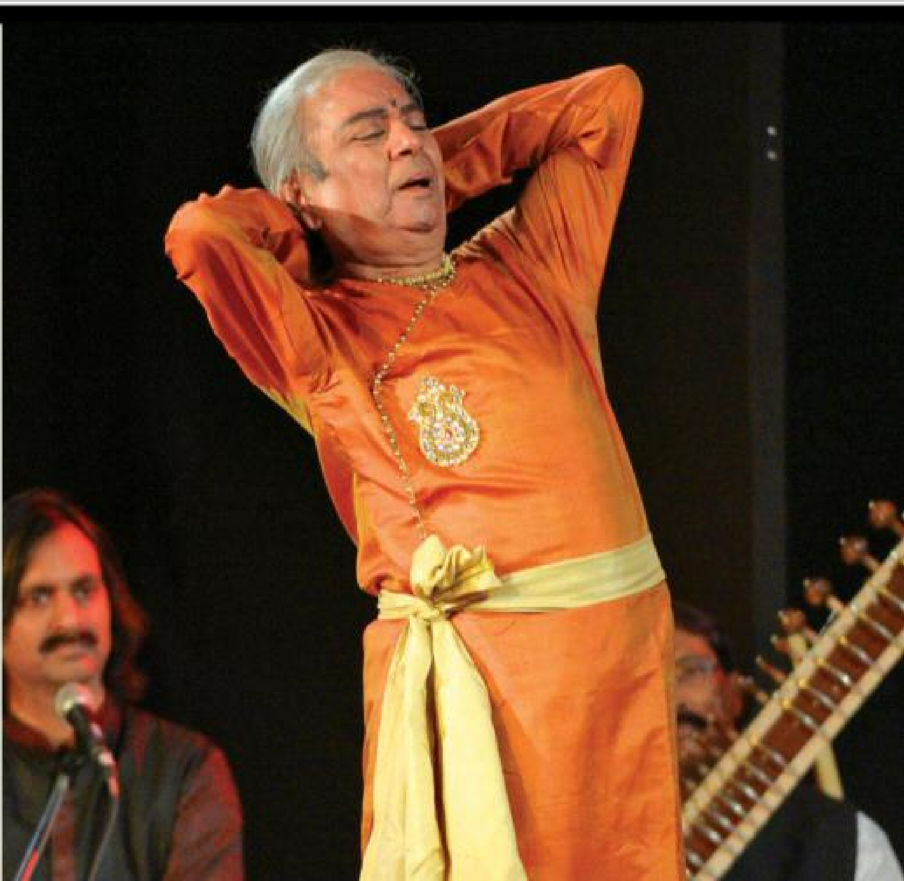
TRANSFORMING TRADITIONS

PANDIT BIRJU MAHARAJ, 83

An all-encompassing artist, Pt. Birju Maharaj has not only transformed Kathak's repertoire but also increased its lifespan

BY ADITI MANGALDAS

MANEESH AGNIHOTRI



RAGHU RAI

AMAZING GRACE

KELUCHARAN MOHAPATRA (1926-2004)

The doyen of Odissi, Kelucharan Mohapatra played an instrumental role in establishing the dance form's repertoire

BY MADHAVI MUDGAL

The Odissi dance form would not be what it is today if it wasn't for Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra. For me, he is its main architect. Coming from a family of painters in Raghurajpur, Odisha, he distilled the elements from the traditional dance practices of 'Gotipua' and 'Mahari' and studied temple sculptures and paintings to give Odissi a stratified form. If ever told that what he did was ingenious, he would say: "*Yeh to aisa hi tha* (It was like that)". It wasn't. He refined the movement vocabulary.

His creative genius made him iconic. He choreographed the exquisite *ashtapadis* of Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* with such continuity of thought that it had the ability to evoke a feeling in a spectator. When he taught us one during a workshop in 1979, I encouraged him to perform on stage. When he essayed a *nayika*, he never looked effeminate. There are hundreds of male Odissi dancers today but he started the trend. He created dancers who could actualise his vision, be it Sanjukta Panigrahi, Sonal Mansingh or Kumkum Mohanty.

He has left behind many dancers who are propagating his style in academies across the world. He laid the foundation on which others are building their repertoire. ■

__Madhavi Mudgal__ is an acclaimed Odissi dancer

Pandit Birju Maharajji has that artistic persona that transcends logic. He is a guru, dancer, choreographer, singer and composer. And, if that were not enough, he also plays percussion, writes poetry and paints.

It takes a genius to transform a tradition as ancient as the Kathak dance form. And infinitely more in the case of Maharajji, who is the descendant and torchbearer of the illustrious Kalka-Bindadin gharana of Kathak and has many great artists as his predecessors.

A child prodigy, his innate understanding of the form, immersive observations of nature/ humanity and expansive imagination took Kathak beyond its geographic context and brought it centrestage, not only in India but globally as a classical dance form of the highest calibre. He transformed not only Kathak's repertoire but its presentation, pedagogy, lifespan, all the while keeping its essence intact. He embodies both the tradition he inherited and the contemporary impetus. His students, now renowned artists, span the world.

He is the only Kathak artist to have been awarded the Padma Vibhushan by the Government of India. Everything that enters that erudite brain, heart and body is transformed into dance. His explorations of Kathak include many collaborations with great artists in diverse fields, such as Satyajit Ray, Balasaraswati, Zakir Hussain, Kelucharan Mohapatra and Sanjay Leela Bhansali.

As his student, I have always been struck by how his every moment is immersed in dance; every inspiration is transformed into dance; every breath is a rhythm of dance. That surely makes a legend. ■

__Aditi Mangaldas__ is a leading Kathak dancer and choreographer

AN UNBRIDLED PASSION

PRITHVIRAJ KAPOOR (1906-1972)

Even though we might remember him as Shahenshah Akbar in *Mughal-e-Azam*, Prithviraj Kapoor, with his many plays about love, nationalism and fraternity, was the first emperor of the Indian stage

BY LILLETE DUBEY

INDIAN EXPRESS

When I think about modern Indian theatre, the towering figure who first comes to mind is naturally Prithviraj Kapoor. For me, the thing that resonates most was his *junoon*, his unbridled passion for the theatre, combined with his strong sense of social responsibility. He knew the power the theatre had—to influence and change perceptions, inspire thought and action.

> **Through his own theatre company, Prithvi Theatres, Prithviraj Kapoor performed plays of social and political relevance**

As a multi-talented Colossus, he straddled direction and acting, the screen and stage, writing and producing, all with equal ease, but his heart belonged to the theatre. Who else would act in all 2,662 of the shows he had produced, directed and often even written? He then took his plays across the length and breadth of India, telling stories at his own personal cost. He often subsidised his stage productions with his film earnings, a strategy I understand and recognise as a theatre practitioner.

A founding member of the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA), Prithviraj Kapoor finally set up his own company, Prithvi Theatres. With it, he performed plays of social and political relevance. The subjects were diverse—from the Quit India programme and the nationalist movement to plays like *Pathan* that advocated Hindi-Muslim unity and friendship between men of different faiths. In today's climate, that message is especially relevant.

His love for the stage spawned one of the most magical theatre spaces in the country—Prithvi Theatre. The space is revered by all of India's theatre fraternity because it is imbued with the purity of its founder's purpose and spirit. It is a sacred stomping ground that bears witness to the love that millions have for theatre. Be it as performers or spectators, the Prithvi stage allows us all to participate in the wonderful shared human experience that is theatre. ■

__Lillete Dubey__ is a stage and film actress. She is also a theatre director

A CLASS ACT

EBRAHIM ALKAZI (1925-2020)

Though it is hard for audiences to forget the plays he directed, it was in his role as director of the National School of Drama that Ebrahim Alkazi honed the talents of some of India's finest actors

BY NASEERUDDIN SHAH

BANDEEP SINGH

Every student who ever studied under Ebrahim Alkazi wanted to be him; the number of alumni who after finishing the course returned to their native places and promptly attempted (mostly unsuccessfully) to recreate one of his lavish productions, with themselves in the main part instead of the spear-carrier, is legion. The extent to which his persona obsessed us all is evident from the simple fact that no matter how many times a day one went past his office, the temptation to peep in to see what he was doing was irresistible to the extent that I actually found myself peeping in even when he wasn't in town! The boys hero-worshipped him and the girls lusted after him—there is a story, whether apocryphal or not I do not know, that two female students at his house for dinner one day, on visiting the washroom, encountered his safety razor. They dusted it off for traces of his stubble which they wanted to preserve.

Bequeathing class and discipline to Indian theatre and setting the example himself, his legacy of constantly channelising his knowledge of the arts and literature into his theatrical works, making us all aware of the importance of those disciplines in becoming well-rounded theatre workers, is being carried forward by those of his acolytes still engaging with the theatre.

For me, he never lost his gigantic stature despite several run-ins and disagreements. His disapproval mattered as much as his approval. His instinct for what was effective on stage was infallible and he had absolutely no patience with dry analysis and "method" meandering and exploring. Though he seldom bothered to explain (and none had the temerity to ask) about a particular composition or stage business, his reasons would become abundantly clear when the move acquired a life of its own—a lesson of pivotal importance in staging. The dynamism, sophistication and finish in his productions stand unmatched to this day in India. ■

***Naseeruddin Shah** is a renowned stage and film actor. He has also directed several plays*

Point of Impact

S.H. RAZA (1922-2016)

Few artists around the world have worked so extensively with geometric shapes like S.H. Raza did. His works exploring shapes and the 'point' convey a feeling, an emotion

BY GANESH HALOI

I met him only once. He was explaining the 'Point'—the crux of all that he was trying to reach through his creations with geometric shapes—to his audience. I was trying to decipher if my understanding matched his thoughts. Personally, when I look at his canvas of geometric shapes—triangle, rectangle, square, cylinder, lines—I find a certain playfulness in them, a rhythm, a fluidity. The shapes are arranged in a way that they seem to convey a feeling, an emotion.

It was like he was trying to reach at the formless through the use of forms, or vice-versa. The point was both the convergence and divergence of all shapes. It was the point of creation. His use of colours was fascinating too—no blending, just use of pure colours. This simplicity also tells the simple yet profound story of the 'Point'. ■

***Ganesh Haloi** is one of India's most distinguished painters*

BANDEEP SINGH

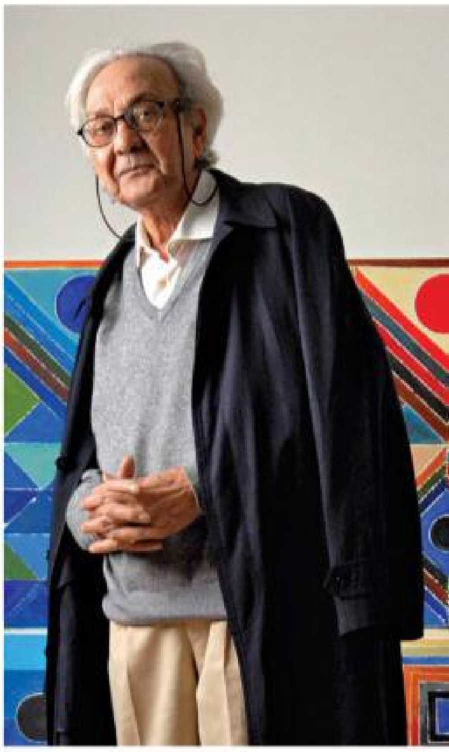


PHOTO COURTESY AKAR PRAKAR, FROM GANESH PRATAP SINGH'S ARCHIVE

Blender of Influences

JAMINI ROY (1887-1972)

Known as the 'father of modern Indian art', Jamini Roy was 50 years ahead of his time

BY ANJOLIE ELA MENON

Jamini Roy grew up in Belliatore, a village in West Bengal, and studied at the Government College of Art, Kolkata, under Abanindranath Tagore. Widely regarded as the father of modern Indian art, Roy was trained in the British academic style of painting, but later abandoned his academic training for a style inspired by Bengali folk traditions. By 1930, he had completely switched over to traditional styles inspired by Patua scroll paintings and the Kalighat Pat style.

In attempting to bridge the gap between western art and the impact of Indian culture, Roy created an extraordinary blend of influences—the wash techniques prevalent in Santiniketan, folk and tribal art and the Kalighat paintings.

Jamini's prolific output was aided by a group of young artists who, rather than depending on imported foreign materials, worked on handmade paper using powdered indigenous pigments blended with gum. This enabled Roy to offer his paintings to the public at very low prices so that every household could afford a painting. (Ironically, according to Artery India Art Intelligence, his painting, *Musicians*, sold at a London auction for Rs 72.1 lakh in May 2007.)

Today, Roy is remembered for his amazing contribution to Indian art, but, in retrospect, his oeuvre could be classified as post-modern. Jamini Roy was 50 years ahead of his time. ■

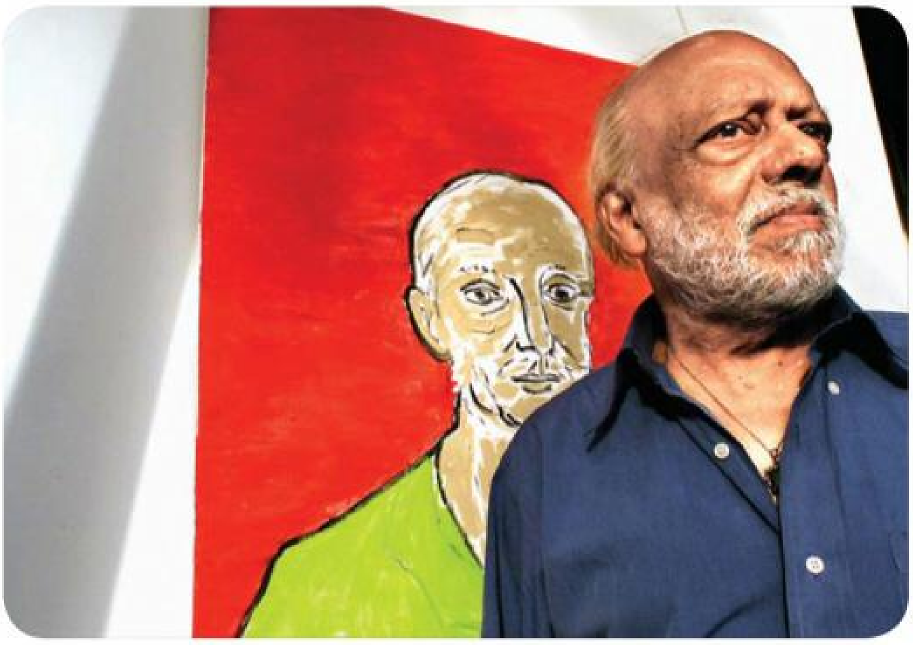
Anjolie Ela Menon *is a renowned contemporary artist*

A Savage Energy

F.N. SOUZA (1924-2004)

Artist F.N. Souza emphasised the spirit of creative and artistic freedom in his works, celebrating India's cultural emancipation from colonial rule

BY ROOBINA KARODE



GETTY IMAGES

Artist Francis Newton Souza was a founder member of the Bombay Progressive Artists' Group. Formed around the time of India's Independence, the group resonated and emphasised the idea of freedom, including creative and artistic freedom, celebrating our cultural emancipation from colonial rule. The subaltern man, labourers, peasants and workers all became subjects and themes in works by Souza and his contemporaries. Artistic sincerity was most important to them. A newly-independent nation was grappling with issues of social disparity, inequality, religious impositions and Souza's rebellious spirit painted these themes with a savage energy, using distortion and aggression in line and colour.

Souza's initial years were spent in his native Goan district. The untitled, oil on board work by Souza, also identified as '*Family*' or '*Indian family*', from 1947 is believed to have been originally titled, '*After Working in the Field All Day, We Have No Rice to Eat*'. It shows a family of four along with a cat at their feet and leaves a clear impression of the artist's socio-political Leftist inclination. One encounters a frame within the composition with abundance of food, ambiguously devised as either a window or an extravagant image in the house of a subjugated family with empty bowls, naked feet and barely clothed bodies. His staunch belief in using art to "alter deplorable conditions of society" led him to depict characters from the margins with utmost compassion. ■

Roobina Karode *is the Director and Chief Curator at the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art*

DELICATE YET POWERFUL

ANISH KAPOOR, 67

The creator of iconic works, like the *Cloud Gate* in Chicago, sculptor and artist Anish Kapoor has a knack for looking at the familiar and finding something new

BY SUBODH GUPTA

Anish Kapoor, in my opinion, is among the most important living artists today. I first came to Delhi in the late 1980s and was looking at works by all kinds of artists working in India. It was harder pre-internet to see the works of international artists, so I remember going to the American Centre Library and seeing Kapoor's early pigments works: red, yellow, black piles of colour and pure form. Delicate and powerful. I was interested in how an Indian-born artist was able to take something from a root and then transform it into a contemporary language. It informed the path of many artists who look at the familiar in material and see the other, who see their own surrounding subjectively and then transform it as an object.

> **Sculptor Anish Kapoor is able to take something from a root and transform it into a contemporary language**

In 2003, I saw his masterpiece *Marsyas* at the Turbine Hall at Tate Modern in London, which was really about space and pushing a building out of itself. Some of my favourite works by Kapoor are his stainless steel mirror pieces and the *Cloud Gate* in Chicago which really interact with the city as public sculptures ought to. ■

***Subodh Gupta** is a contemporary Indian artist of repute*

CHARLES PLATIAU/ REUTERS

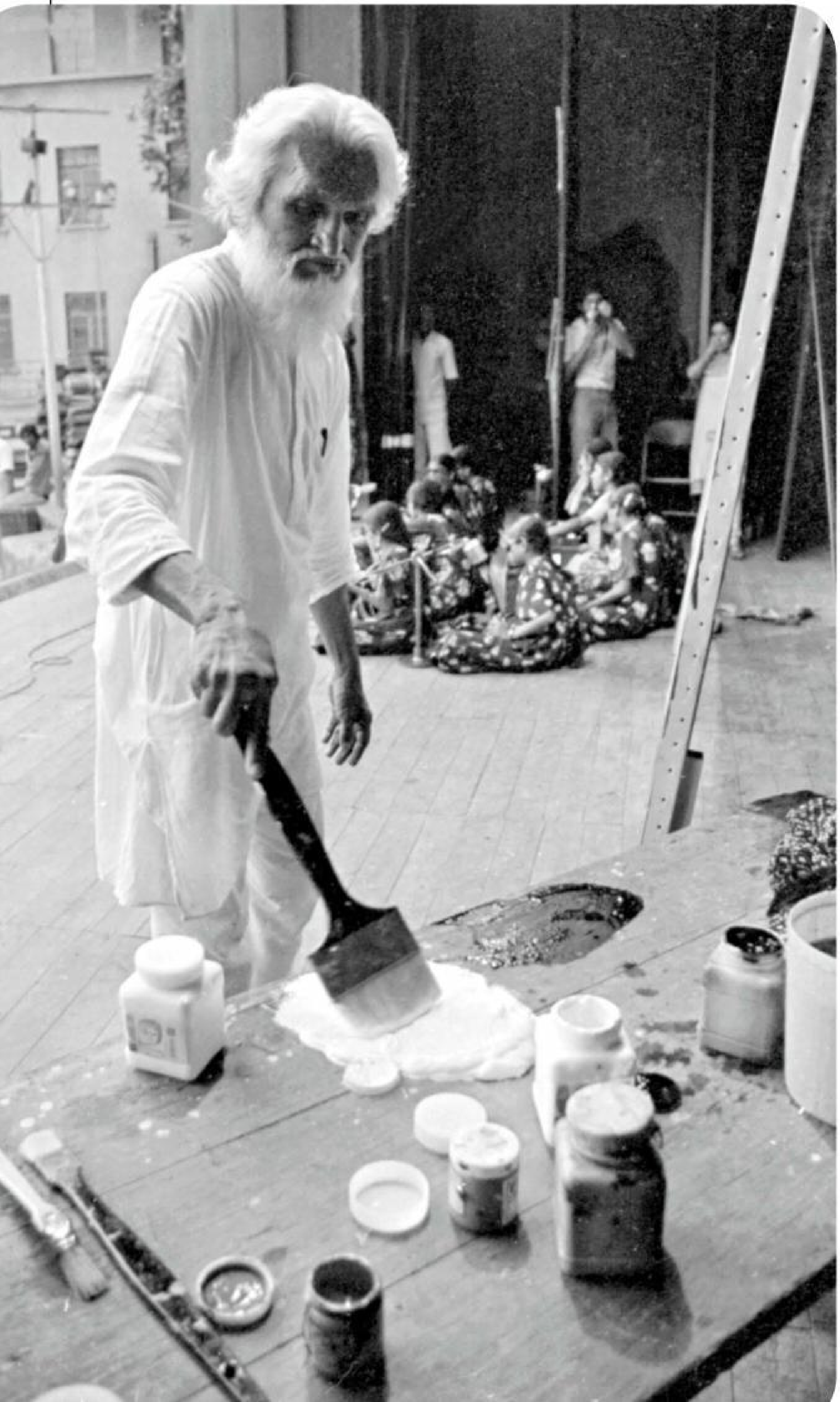
A Prolific Master

M.F. HUSAIN (1915-2011)

Though his later years were mired in controversy, Maqbool Fida Husain was indisputably one of India's greatest 20th-century artists. From gods to Gandhi, his canvas made room for all aspects of Indian life

BY KRISHEN KHANNA

ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

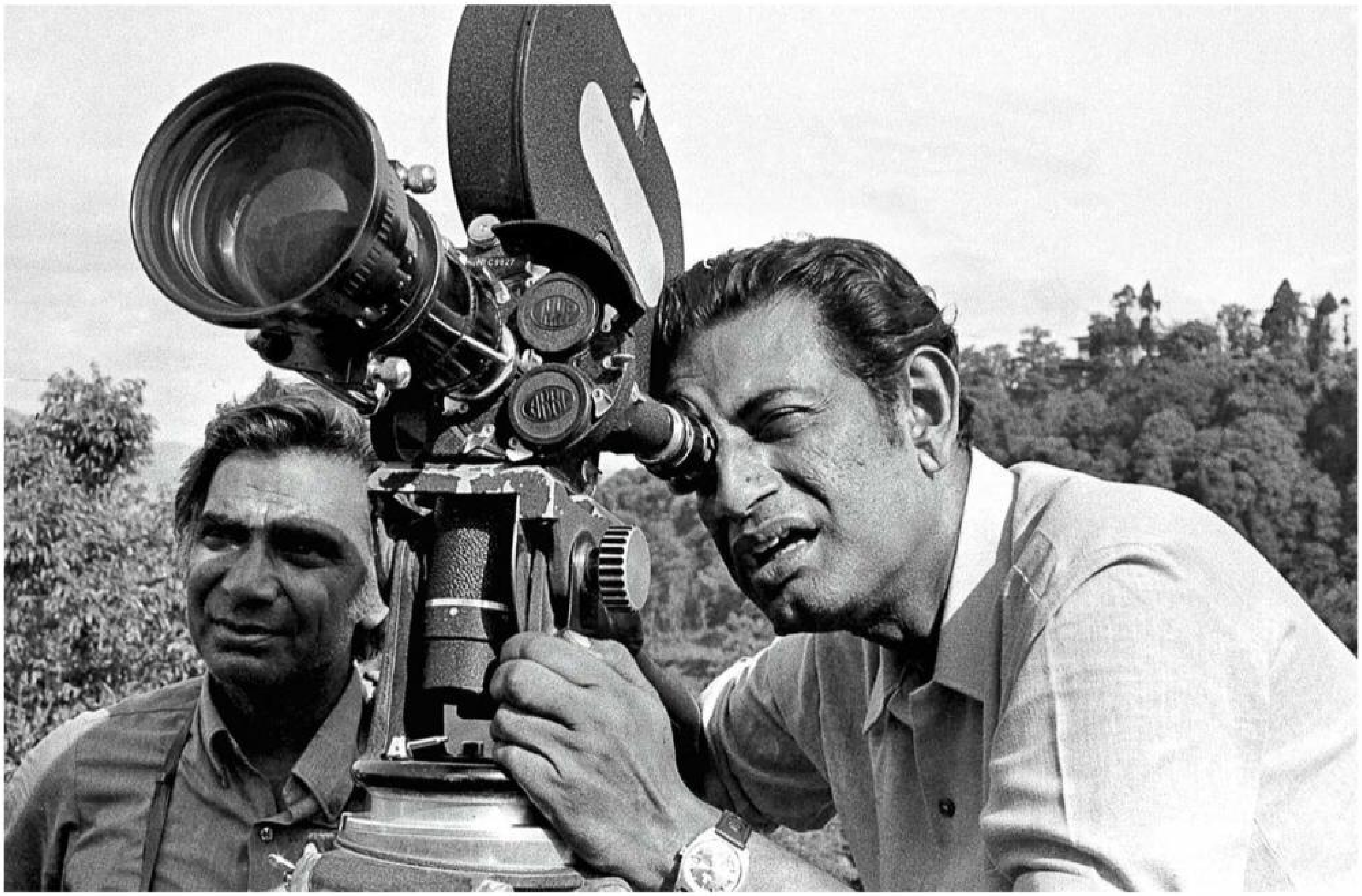


I was first impressed by Husain, the artist, but also by Husain, the man. He was very charming—though his charm for ladies of the court was one thing, and that for friends and artists like me, wholly another. He once borrowed a book from me—*Art* by Clive Bell. A few days later, he sent me a painting of his with a note that said he had forgotten the book in a taxi. There was not a day that I didn't see him. I felt honoured when he asked me to join the Bombay Progressive Artists' Group. Every painter in the group was great—I use that word in its truest sense—and though we were all poor, we felt we were princes.

M.F. Husain's art became iconic not only because it was accessible, but also because there was a lot of it

Husain's art became iconic not only because it was accessible but also because there was a lot of it. He painted billboards before becoming an artist. That capacity for working fast stayed with him. That said, he knew human beings were not machines and he never shied away from his shortcomings. Not once did he portray himself as a 'Muslim partner'. Those questions of identity and community didn't interest him. Everyone was his friend. His influence, I believe, is not a static thing. Like his art, it is live. ■

***Krishen Khanna** is an acclaimed artist and a Padma Bhushan awardee*



ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Making Local Global

SATYAJIT RAY (1921-1992)

From scripting to composing music, Satyajit Ray had mastery over every aspect of filmmaking. Celebrated the world over, his films show how ordinary life can have extraordinary possibility

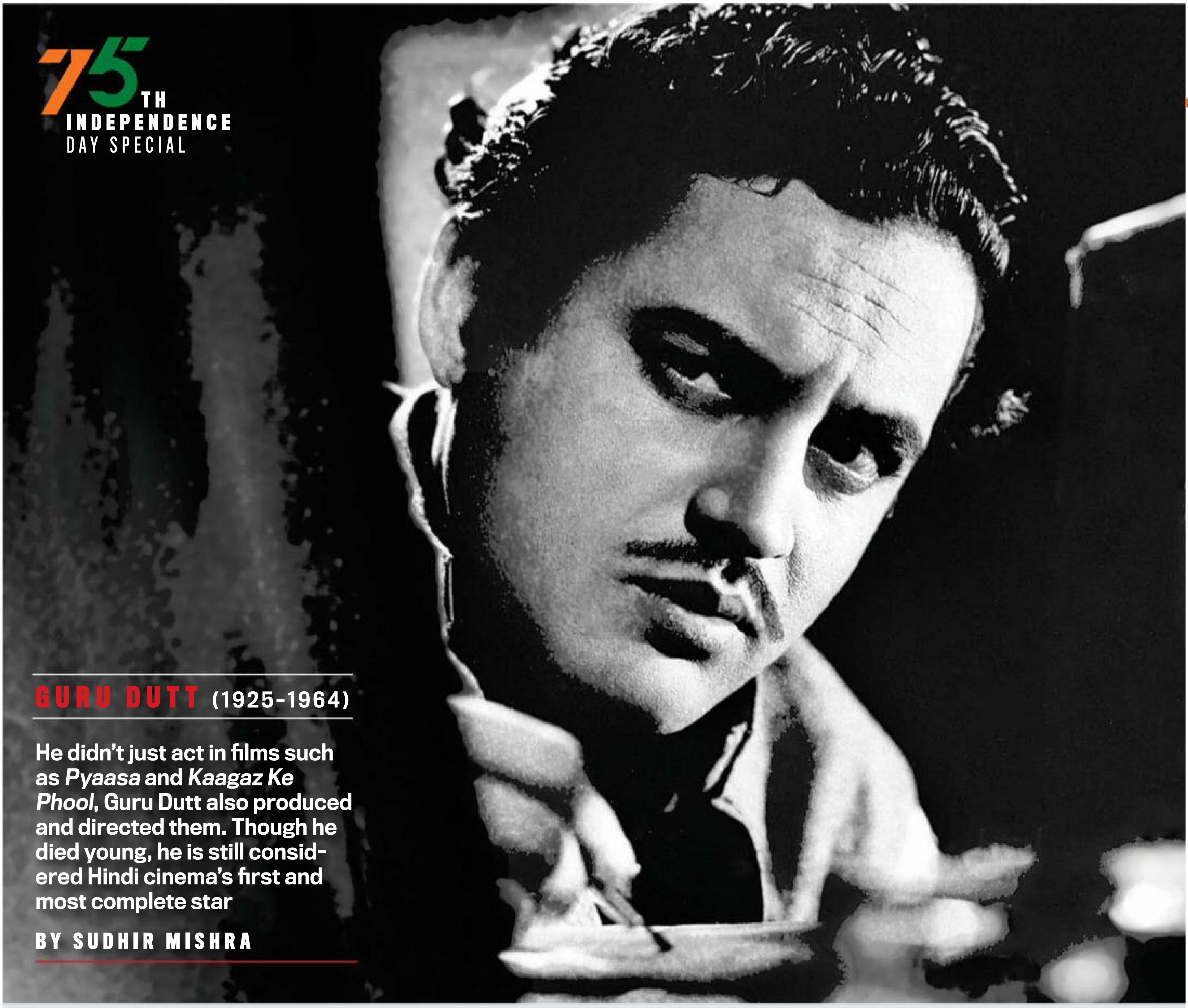
BY RITESH BATRA

I remember randomly picking up the films of Satyajit Ray from a video library when I was growing up in Bombay. For me, they were a revelation. Not just did they show me that it was possible for there to be cinema outside the Bollywood mainstream, but also that one could make movies about everyday people and everyday stories. That realisation never did leave my consciousness. It was a big gift to me.

There are other works of his that are much more loved, but my favourite Ray film is *Mahanagar*. It is, actually, one of my favourite films in the world. I like how it's so nuanced, but what I like most is the empathy that Ray has for each and every character of his. I remember reading an interview of Om Puri many years ago. The only direction that Satyajit Ray gave him during *Sadgati* was in a scene that saw him standing at the door. Ray asked him if he'd ever seen a child or goat look hesitant before coming in. This wasn't result-oriented direction. This was direction a good actor could use, direction that would then help a scene and a film arrive at a place of truth. I try and emulate that the best I can.

Ray's cinema shows that something really local, something true to a place and time, can travel the world. The more specific you make your film, the more universal it becomes. Ray's films are timeless because they are simple. Films are often made for immediate consumption and then discarded. Ray, however, is not disposable. His movies are like a clock you own all your life and then pass on. Without thinking of reactions at home or abroad, Ray stuck to his path. That's the one biggest lesson of his life. ■

Ritesh Batra *is the director of internationally acclaimed films like* The Lunchbox *and* Photograph



GURU DUTT (1925-1964)

He didn't just act in films such as *Pyaasa* and *Kaagaz Ke Phool*, Guru Dutt also produced and directed them. Though he died young, he is still considered Hindi cinema's first and most complete star

BY SUDHIR MISHRA

ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

POETIC REALISM

My grandmother really identified with the *chhoti bahu* character in *Sahib, Bibi aur Ghulam*, and it was she who showed me the film for the first time. As a child, I didn't quite get it, but as I went on to see the film another 25-30 times, I was stunned by its poetic realism, by Guru Dutt's emotional depth. He works that depth so beautifully into this tale of feudal decay, a tale he personalises so well. If someone came and told me I could take one Hindi film with me when I go, I'd take *Sahib, Bibi*.... Had my grandmother not shown me the film, I don't think I'd have been making films today.

It was Guru Dutt who taught me that you don't become a filmmaker just by shooting reality. You have to imbue that reality with your craft. The way he uses the camera and lighting only goes to show that technicians, for him, were first co-artists. He made very few films—he died at 39—but with them he elevated the popular Hindi film form to great art. He also elevated Bombay, and women, too, in his films. His characters, I feel, contained in them even the opposite of what they signified. Though Guru Dutt's films mean different things to different people, it's clear he had only one muse—cinema. ■

> Guru Dutt's few films elevated the popular Hindi film form to great art. His characters contained in them even the opposite of what they signified

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Sudhir Mishra *is the director of acclaimed films such as* Hazaaron Khwaishein Aisi *and* Dharavi

THE TORCHBEARER

RAJ KAPOOR (1924-1988)

Kapoor set up his own studio, RK Films, when only 24. With *Awaara*, a 1951 film he produced, directed and starred in, he became independent India's most prodigious film talent

BY SIMI GAREWAL

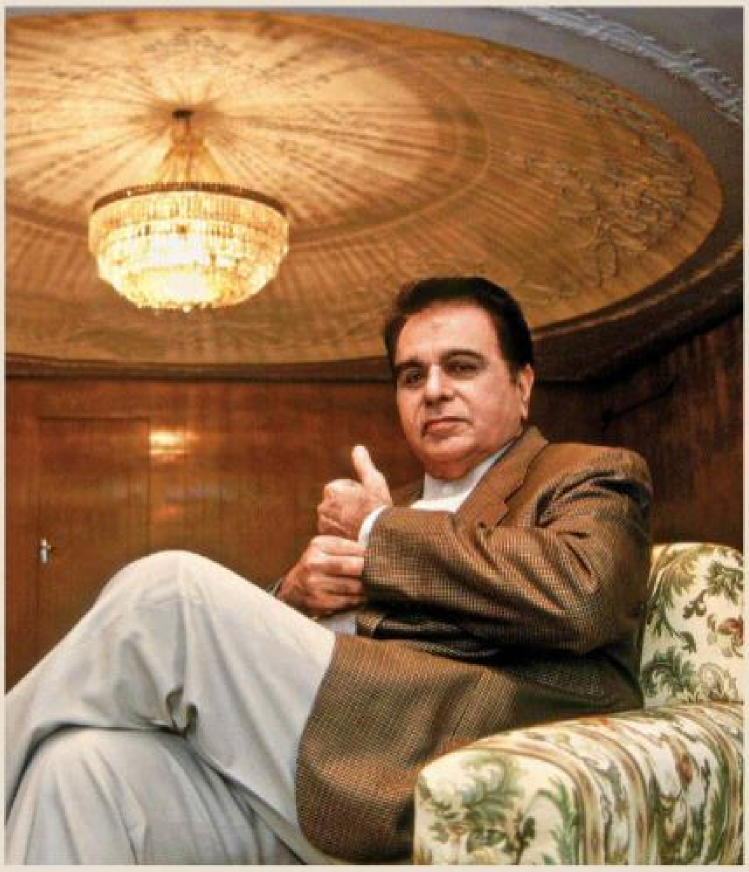
As a person, Raj Kapoor was sentimental, shrewd, child-like, deeply suspicious and intensely God-fearing. He was devoid of self-vanity, a generous host, very playful (he would invent games!) and enjoyed his Archie comics. He could be moody, even eccentric at times. Ever restless, occasionally outspoken, shorn of affectation, he was possessive and very sensitive. All in double doses. Conceivably, he was a genius; certainly a complete man, full of inner fire, energy, follies and wisdom.

As a filmmaker, when Raj Kapoor said "cinema is my life", it was his inherent truth. The painstaking obsession he had for films was phenomenal. Nothing and no one was more important than his film. Rajji loved and pampered his crew, even more than his own children! And if one had done a good day's work, he never begrudged the praise.

He was also a torchbearer of Indian cinema. Be it a show for charity or a relief fund, Rajji would lead the film industry dancing or singing, anything to help the cause. Never hesitant or fearful, he moved with confidence, sure of himself and his place in the world. ■

Simi Garewal *acted in Raj Kapoor's* Mera Naam Joker, *and directed the documentary,* Living Legend Raj Kapoor

ALAMY STOCK PHOTO


FAWZAN HUSAIN

The Mesmeriser

DILIP KUMAR (1922-2021)

Few have left behind a thespian legacy as rich as Dilip Kumar's whose style has inspired at least two generations

BY RICHA CHADHA

In an era where his contemporaries were busy fine-tuning their *takiya kalams*, Dilip Kumar was The Hero without being heroic. There's no dramatic entry in the song *'Bichua'*. He casually enters, giving space to his beautiful lady love [Vyjayanthimala] to shine, without diminishing himself. His 'method acting' was effortless, far ahead of its time.

Kumar was always in the moment. He played off his colleagues and didn't follow the prevalent rhythms of dialogue delivery. He raised the bar for actors in India by showing what was possible and enhanced the palette of the audience. Today, consciously or unconsciously, many actors copy the legend by attempting to stay real. That is his legacy.

I was a child when I discovered him in *Ram aur Shyam*. He was doing something ridiculous like swallowing a boiled egg whole, but it had me in splits. And he was known as the 'tragedy king'! His versatility was spectacular. Even when you watch his work through the lens of 2021, his performances never seem dated. As an artist, I am indebted to this giant. ■

Richa Chadha *is an actress known for films like* Masaan, Fukrey *and* Gangs of Wasseypur

THE EPITOME OF STYLE

DEV ANAND
(1923-2011)

Iconic in every way, Dev Anand left his signature on everything he did, be it dialogue delivery or even his clothes

BY JACKIE SHROFF

Every pore of Dev Anand was iconic. In his prime, he was the heartthrob of the nation. He was the epitome of style in Hindi cinema. The way he walked, looked and talked had *andaz*. He brought sartorial style too, be it with his shirt collars or the scarves he wore. He was flamboyant, but always dignified. There was a twinkle in his eyes and something pure about him which came across even when he played dark characters.

Voice of India

LATA MANGESHKAR, 91

She recorded her first song when she was just 13, and then in a 73-year career was the voice of India's most loved songs

BY SHREYA GHOSHAL

BHASKAR PAUL

I first met my idol in her studio where I had gone to record. Knowing how big a moment this would be for me, my music director stopped the recording to tell me Lataji had arrived. I instantly left everything and ran down the stairs to see the lady herself sitting in a pristine white saree, glittering in diamonds, with a shy smile on her face, slightly bowed with age yet her eyes shining bright from within. Her aura was humbling and I was left speechless. Although she recognised me and gave me her blessings, I could not say anything sensible for I was awestruck. I have learnt most of what I know of music listening to her innumerable songs. Her honey-dipped vocal timbre, tone, nuances, expressions, As a kid, my mother used to fix my hair like his. When I began to see his work, I was so swayed that I began to talk like him. I was working as a model when he gave me my big break in *Swami Dada*. He told me [speaking in Dev Anand style], "*Subah subah tumhari tasveer dekhi aur ab tum saamne khade ho* [Saw your photo in the morning and here you are]." Then 15 days later, he apologised and said that Mithun*da* [Chakraborty] had replaced me because he's a great dancer. He ended up casting me as a henchman. I remember once the fight master was upset and shouted at me. He stood up for me and said, "Take it easy. He's a new boy, he will learn. Give him time, show him how to do it." That attitude of treating every actor with respect has stayed with me. It's from legends like him you learn how to be grounded and make everyone feel comfortable. ■

***Jackie Shroff** has featured in acclaimed hits like* Ram Lakhan, Parinda *and* Rangeela

BANDEEP SINGH

emotions, power, delicacy, finesse, it's all perfection. Yet it's impossible to explain why sometimes when I listen to her songs like '*Mai ri main kase kahun*', '*Rasme ulfat*' or so many others, I am so moved that I have tears in my eyes. It's that undefined dimension that one can only feel but cannot see or point out. An artisan intricately sculpts an idol of a God but only when there is the presence of '*prana*' after elaborate prayers and rituals do we worship that idol. Lataji puts that '*prana*' in every song she has sung. ■

***Shreya Ghoshal** is a multiple National Award-winning playback singer*

The Original Maverick

KISHORE KUMAR (1929-1987)

When Kishore Kumar sang, he made magic. In his regular life, he loved his toys

BY AMIT KHANNA

As '60s kids, Hindi film songs were our staple audio diet. Being avid listeners of Binaca Geetmala, one was familiar with all the hits over the years. While I enjoyed the songs by Lata, Rafi, Asha and others, it was Kishore Kumar I loved the most. Happenstance brought me to work with Dev Anand in films. It was there that I first came face-to-face with Kishore Kumar at a Navketan recording in 1971. It was a true fanboy moment. Little did I know that very soon he would be singing my lyrics like '*Chalte Chalte mere yeh geet yaad rakhna...*'

SINGH BHAWAN

Over the years, he grew fond of me and was always happy to see me. I had the privilege of being among the select few to get invited to his home in Juhu. He showed me the jalopy he had used in *Chalti Ka Naam Gaadi*. In another room were strewn a hundred mechanical toys which he apparently loved playing with. Which brings to mind an apocryphal story about him. When he was at the top as a singer and actor, a producer gave him only half of his promised fee. He landed at the shoot with half his moustache shaved off, saying, "*Aadhe paise mein aadha face shoot kar lo.*"

The hugely talented Kishore was the original maverick. He made films, music and magic. He was the voice of superstars. Among his last songs was my lyric from *Sache Ka Bol Bala* – '*Tanha, main akela, toota tara koi, Aasman mera, meri zameen manzil khoi khoi* (Alone and lonely, I am like a falling star, mine is the firmament and the world, yet I am lost).' ■

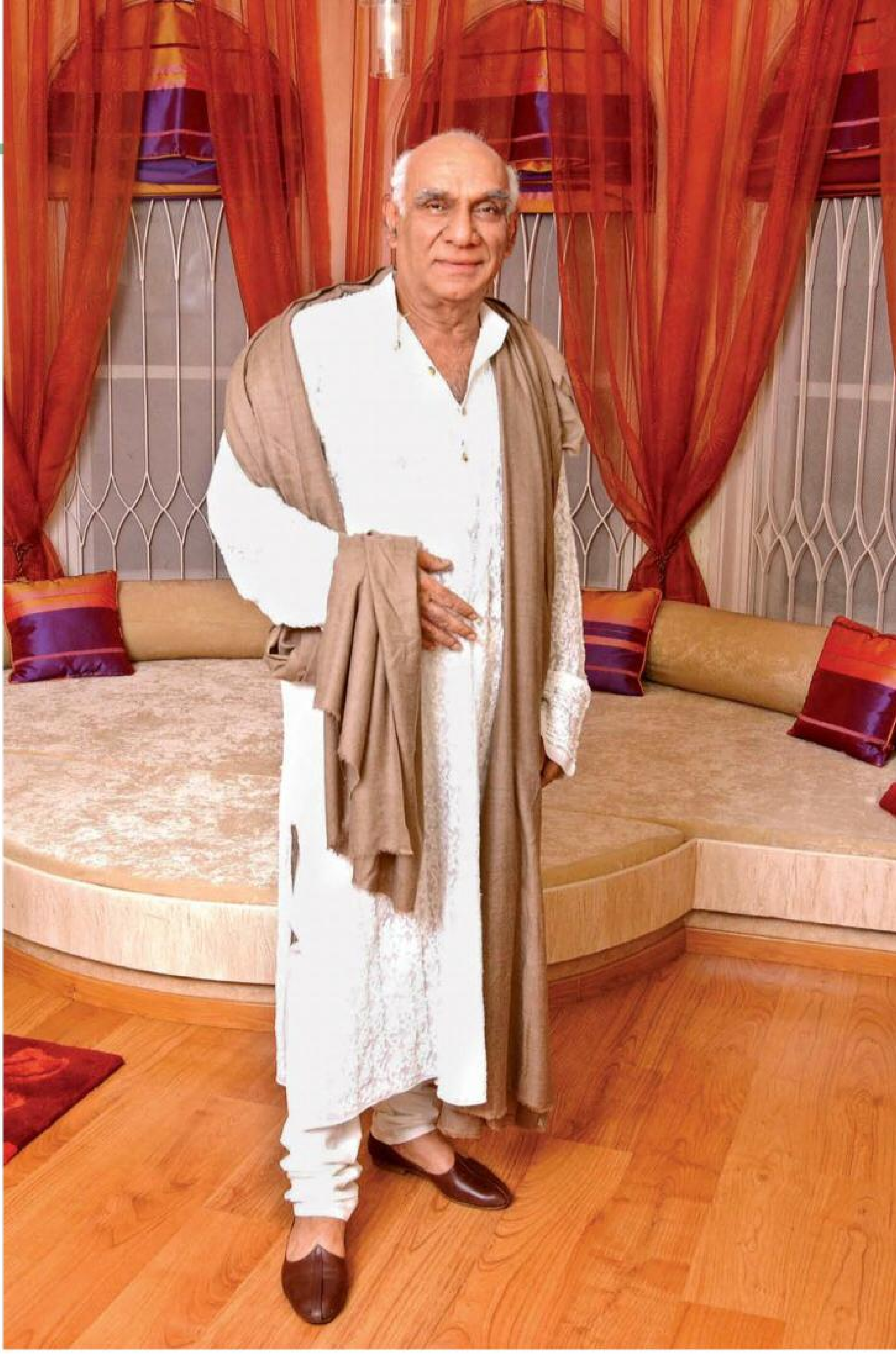
***Amit Khanna** is a writer, filmmaker and media veteran*

THE KING OF ROMANCE

YASH CHOPRA
(1932-2012)

Yash Chopra was known for his legendary love stories, but he also took up taboo themes, even creating the angry young man avatar

BY RANI MUKERJI



BHASKAR PAUL

Yash Chopra always chose to go against the grain in the mainstream format and, most times, succeeded too. He made *Dhool Ka Phool* in 1959 where he spoke about an illegitimate child. His next, *Dharmputra*, was about the Hindi-Muslim dynamic. His first colour film, *Waqt*, was the first multi-starrer. He made an *Ittefaq* (1969), a song-less film, when no one could imagine Hindi cinema without songs! He started his production house with *Daag* (1973), a bold drama about a man living with two women! After having cast Mr Bachchan as an angry young man in *Deewaar* and *Trishul*, he made him every woman's dream lover in *Kabhie Kabhie* and *Silsila*.

When mainstream films were largely driven by male characters and women were hardly pivotal to the narrative, Yash Chopra's films had women as equals. He was a man ahead of his time who loved that his heroines had something to say about life and society. When Bollywood was only making action films, he chose to make a film like *Chandni*, about an independent woman who chooses her own path when she doesn't get the support of her lover.

He pretty much dabbled in every genre but the Yash Chopra romance is a genre by itself. He made love stories which transcended time or were way ahead of it like *Lamhe*. Love for him could never be considered wrong. Society might judge the hero and the heroine for their relationship and call it names, but he didn't believe in labelling love. He fundamentally saw it as something pure and believed the world would be a better place with more love. ■

> **The Yash Chopra romance is a genre by itself. He saw love as something pure and believed the world was a better place with more of it**

Rani Mukerji *is acclaimed for her roles in* Saathiya, Hum Tum, Bunty aur Babli, Black *and* Mardaani

Breaking Sound Barriers

R.D. BURMAN (1939-1994)

Burman's diverse filmography is proof that the sound he came to trademark was all his own

BY PRITAM CHAKRABORTY

INDIA TODAY

R.D. Burman is my biggest inspiration. All the songs I loved when I was a child—Hindi and Bengali—were invariably his numbers. I remember RD would release albums during Durga Puja every year. A group of us would gather round to hear these and that was our festival. We knew the names of all his musicians and recordists by heart. If he was giving music for a film—be it a *Jeeva* or a *Saagar*—we would catch the very first show on the first day. We even had an R.D. Burman fan club.

He had an obvious signature, and I think that's because he worked with the same set of musicians for each of his songs. Also, he had a style that was very unique. His use of guitars is a case in point. Later on, a lot many people tried to ape him but the music was never the same. What R.D. Burman was doing with sound was groundbreaking for his time. I'm bewildered by how modern his music still feels.

When I was a student in FTII, I tried hard to meet R.D. Burman, but he passed away before I could. He was at his peak in the 1970s and he got a lot of love, but though he was making great music even in the '90s, his songs didn't become big hits. I did sometimes feel that he only got his real due after he was gone. ■

Pritam Chakraborty *is an award-winning film composer*

Queen of Costumes

BHANU ATHAIYA (1929-2020)

Bhanu Athaiya created worlds, characters and magical cinematic moments through the art of costume design

BY SABYASACHI MUKHERJEE

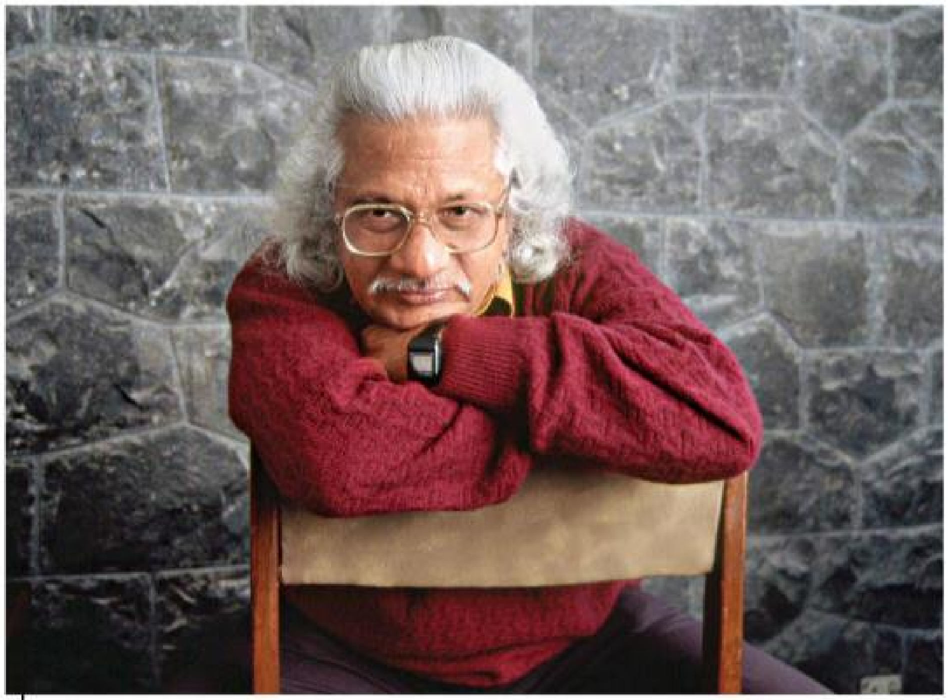
BETTMANN ARCHIVE

In *Chaudhvin Ka Chand* (1960), she transformed Waheeda Rahman into a vision of ethereal beauty against the Nawabi heritage backdrop of Lucknow; in *Teesri Manzil* (1966), she created the now iconic flamenco-inspired cabaret costume for Helen; in *Satyam Shivam Sundaram* (1978), she had Zeenat Aman flitting between a reclusive village girl and an apsara-like fantasy figure; and, of course, in Sir Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi* (1982), her Oscar-winning magnum opus, she captured half a century as she dressed the protagonist and a sea of extras across time zones and the most pivotal phase of Indian history. Bhanu Athaiya had an extraordinary talent to create worlds, characters and some of the most magical cinematic moments through the art of costume design.

From her days as an artist where she was the only woman to exhibit at a show by the Progressive Artists' Group in Bombay in 1953, to realising that she needed to make a steady income and becoming an illustrator at magazines like *Eve's Weekly*, then by opening her own fashion boutique and, finally, finding her true calling when Hindi cinema discovered her—Athaiya is both artist and muse, inspiring even as she created. And she got it right from her first film, Guru Dutt's *C.I.D.* in 1956. In her pursuit of authenticity, she left behind an unparalleled legacy. It's a lesson creative people spend decades trying to realise.

A fashion designer's work is different to that of a costume designer, but Athaiya taught me how to be true to the cause, to learn and unlearn as you evolve, to own the story you're telling and to mesmerise the audience by telling it right. ■

Sabyasachi Mukherjee *is a leading fashion designer and the costume designer for films like* Black *and* Kahaani



SHARAD SAXENA

A MIRROR TO SOCIETY

ADOOR GOPALAKRISHNAN, 80

The globally acclaimed film director has never compromised in his attempt to rewrite the language of Malayalam cinema

BY B. UNNIKRISHNAN

Adoor Gopalakrishnan was perhaps the first director to gain a global audience for Malayalam cinema. He and contemporaries from the state like G. Aravindan and Shaji N. Karun have made revolutionary contributions to the parallel cinema movement in India.

Adoor's debut feature, *Swayamvaram* (1972), announced his arrival. It won the National Award and pioneered the new wave in Malayalam cinema. Taking inspiration from the European neo-realist movement, he also adapted some of Malayalam literature's best-known works for the big screen. In a way, he made films for himself but still managed to widen his audience globally with every feature. When we watch Adoor's arc—from *Swayamvaram* to *Pinneyum* (Once More), the 12 feature films he's made in the past five decades—we are actually holding up a mirror to Kerala society and the changes it has gone through in this period.

Adoor has been uncompromising in his work ethic, never bothering about market dynamics or falling prey to vested interests, be it cultural or political. His film trajectory reveals a relentless experiment in rediscovering and transforming himself. He is 80, but is even now at work on a new script and designs for his new project. What more can a cultural icon do during the pandemic? ■

B. Unnikrishnan *is a Malayalam filmmaker, scriptwriter and producer*

THE WORDSMITH

GULZAR, 87

Almost everything that Gulzar touches becomes gold. He has not just written and directed classics such as *Angoor* and *Aandhi*, his lyrics have given Hindi cinema an ever-replenishing corpus to live by

BY VARUN GROVER

Gulzar is the overcoat from which emerged the modern Hindi film lyrics. There was, of course, Hindi film music before him with a robust poetic tradition and many legends regularly raising the bar, but nobody has opened more portals between popular and abstract, intellectual and emotional as effortlessly and as frequently as Gulzar. And he not just opened them, he has been our torch-bearing guide for the past six decades, constantly redefining what a simple song can achieve in terms of imagery and meaning.

Deeply philosophical lyrics like '*Wo shaam kuchh ajeeb thi*' or '*Tujhse naaraaz nahin zindagi*' entered the popular lexicon simply because Gulzar found graceful words to string these complex

LIVING MEDIA INDIA

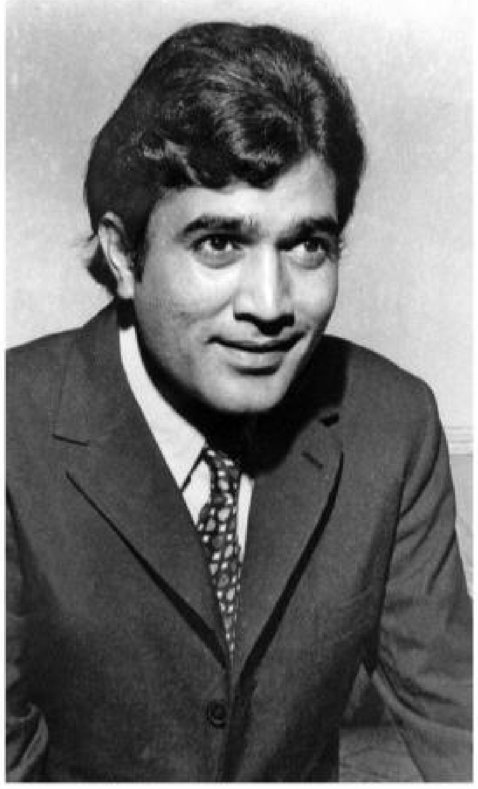
In Hindi film music, nobody has opened more portals between the popular and the abstract than Gulzar

thoughts. His fascination with the inherent musicality of dialects has brought a whole dictionary-worth of unusual words centre-stage in Hindi film music. From '*Chaddi pahan ke phool*' to '*Kimaam ki khushboo*', to '*Kaandhe ka til*' to '*Naina thag lenge*' to rhyming '*Roos ka Pushkin*' with '*Mumkin*' to Punjabi-loaded '*Auni-pauni yaariyaan teri*' to a hat-tip to Bangla in '*Paanta-bhaaate tatke begun pora*'—Gulzar's diary leaves no words behind.

That he's also one of the most accomplished and sensitive screenwriters and directors in Hindi film history just makes the entire equation even more mind-boggling. But then, like all great theorems of mathematics, Gulzar's existence can't be separated from his elegance. ■

Varun Grover *is a Hindi film lyricist, poet, writer and stand-up comic*

ALAMY STOCK PHOTO



SHEER MAGIC

RAJESH KHANNA (1942-2012)

Rajesh Khanna was India's first superstar, heralding the age of romance in Hindi films

BY SHATRUGHAN SINHA

My first memory of Rajesh Khanna is from 1970. Fresh out of the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII), I had started getting small roles while Rajesh Khanna was already a star. There was a magic I felt seeing him, with his expressive good looks and attitude. There were many others who perhaps deserved a higher place in the film industry, but they didn't have Rajesh Khanna's *jalwa*. He firmly believed he was a superstar, and that made all the difference.

Rajesh Khanna was what we call a 'phenomenon', edifying India's notions of romance with his effortless performances. His aura singlehandedly created an era of Indian cinema defined by innocence where the good guys always won in the end. He personified what we call 'enduring love'.

I worked with him in many films, and though he was infamous for being late, you had to be there to see how the entire set gravitated to him when Khanna entered. Within no time, as he moved around with a disarming smile, everyone on set would be eating out of his hands, latching on to his every word and laughing even before he completed a joke.

Rajesh Khanna was also someone who paid for his food on the sets ("*mere account mein likho*") and compensated his producers for cancelled shoots. To top it all, he was a brutally honest man, wearing his emotions on his sleeve. Rajesh Khanna was upset with me when I contested against him (I still regret the decision because I could not say no to Advaniji) in the 1992 Lok Sabha byelection for the New Delhi seat.

Khanna saw the pinnacle of glory and also an age of solitude when he was past his best. I remember sitting for long hours giving him company at his home. He would tell me: "*Sher bhukha mar jayega, lekin beedi nahin piyega.*" ■

Shatrughan Sinha *is an actor and a former Lok Sabha MP and Union minister*

INSTANT CONNECT

RAJINIKANTH, 70

The Thalaiva's generosity is legendary, one reason why he is a reel and real-life hero

BY SURESH KRISSNA

We were working on our first film together (*Annamalai*) when I realised how unique Rajinikanth was—the way he spoke, walked, the way he connected with the masses. Rajini is electrifying when he speaks; there is an instant connection with the masses whether he plays a villain, hero or does comedy. The response in the theatres always amazes me. Here is an actor who isn't typically good looking, isn't a Tamilian, indeed didn't even speak good Tamil. But the rhythm of his dialogue delivery and his body language is so unique that everyone loves him.

What I like most about Rajini is the power he gives to his roles, his unique style and his humble nature. He is so down-to-earth that if I was standing, he would also stand up to talk to me. His involvement and dedication are remarkable and he always pushes everyone to make a scene bigger and better. Rajini would never leave the sets when the shoot was on, knew everyone by name and would often put money in their pockets. Also, he almost never says no to clicking photos with fans, which is why everyone has his photo in their house.

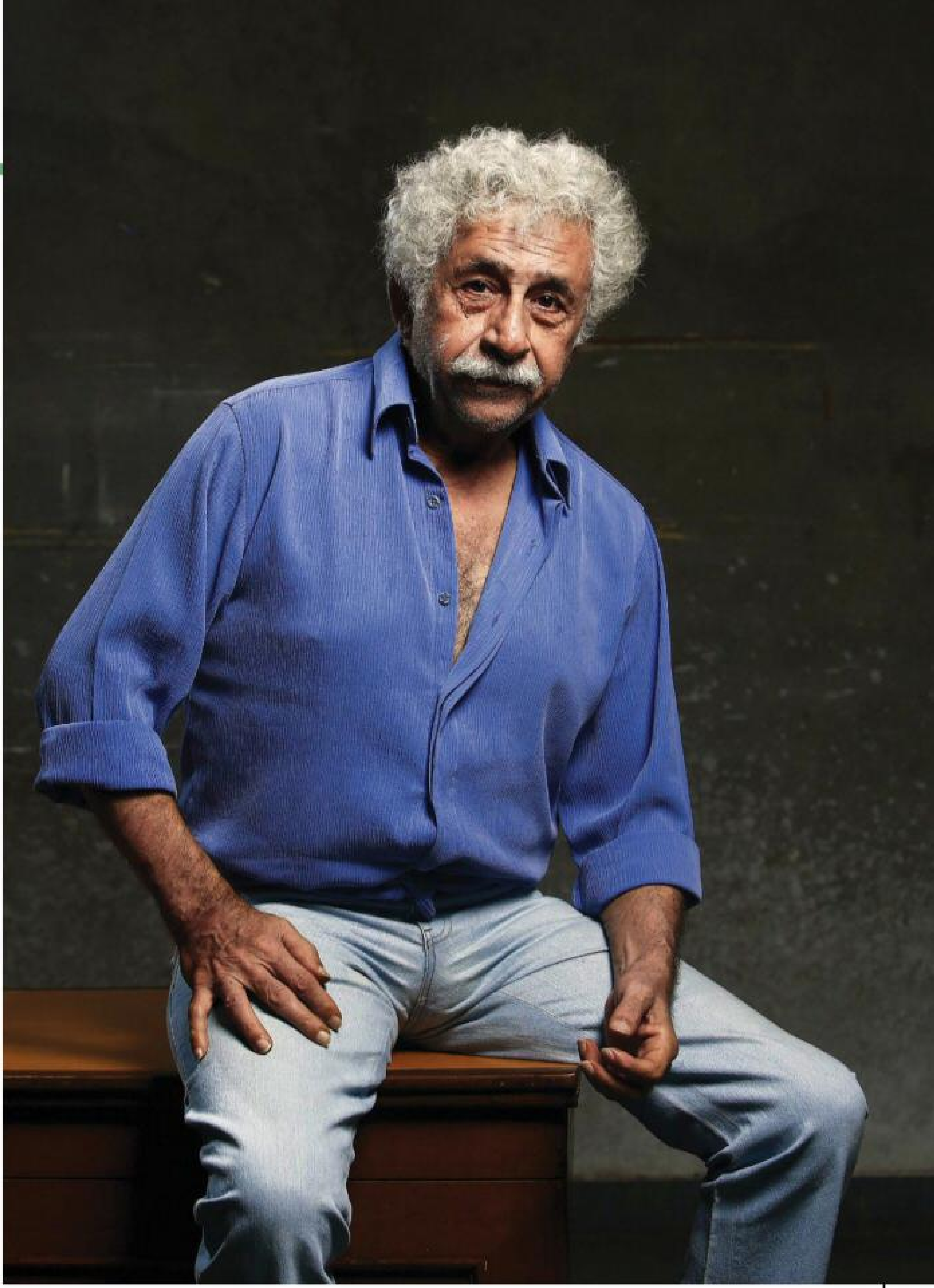
I have done four films with him and before every movie's release he would be very nervous, calling up theatre owners, distributors and even canteen owners all over Tamil Nadu to hear the response to the film. He wanted his films to do well and for everyone to make money. Sometimes, we would go to the theatres in disguise to watch the movie and gauge the people's reaction.

Rajini also has a spiritual mind and believes that he is here because of a divine force. He is always quietly helping writers, directors and others who need help. He doesn't just play wonderful roles on-screen; in his case, reel and real life blend seamlessly. ■

Suresh Krissna *has directed Rajinikanth in four films,* Annamalai, Veera, Baashha *and* Baba

The rhythm of his dialogue delivery and his body language is so unique that everybody loves Rajini

BANDEEP SINGH



DANESH JASSAWALA

PARALLEL UNIVERSE

NASEERUDDIN SHAH, 71

Whether on stage or screen, Naseeruddin Shah overwhelms with his presence, cementing his place in India's parallel cinema

BY MANOJ BAJPAYEE

Though Mr Shah's films never did arrive in our village theatre, I knew him from magazine interviews. Only after I moved to Delhi did I start catching the morning shows of his movies, the ones he made with Shyam Benegal and Govind Nihalani. I was completely mesmerised. In my theatre circle, we talked about only two people—Naseeruddin Shah and Om Puri. They may not have had references for their craft, but we learnt ours by seeing them perform. They were the only De Niros and Pacinos we needed.

I started getting fascinated, in particular, with how Mr Shah used his craft. Be it *Mirch Masala*, *Sparsh* or that iconic scene in *Ardh Satya*, watching him was to witness an acting master-class. The minute you saw his walk and his gait, or the moment you heard his speech and diction, you marvelled. When I'd stop to think about his preparation, I'd find myself staggered. There's so much he taught me.

> **In my theatre circle, we only talked about two people—Naseer and Om Puri... they were the only De Niros and Pacinos we needed**

Mr Shah is very easy to get along with, but he opens up only when you do. Just hearing him speak—whether it's in Urdu, Hindustani or English—is a treat. From him, I have learnt how to conduct myself, how to be forthright and I've learnt how important it is to read. His talent should only be celebrated. ■

Manoj Bajpayee *is a National Award-winning actor*

MILIND SHELTE

THE BIG BOSS

SALMAN KHAN, 55

No actor in Bollywood evokes the kind of frenzy that Salman *bhai* does, which is also why he is the box-office darling of India

BY ALI ABBAS ZAFAR

Having worked with Salman for a decade now, I have realised that his biggest strength is the connect he has with his fiercely loyal audience. There are great actors but not all of them inspire such hero worship. It is what makes a nine-year-old dance to '*Dhinka Chika*' or '*Baby Ko Bass Pasand Hai*'. It's only possible when people are touched or inspired by your work. To build that kind of frenzy among the audience takes years of hard work and doing films in every possible genre. Salman is truly the last of his kind in the sense that no one can match his charisma and fandom.

Even after three decades in the industry, I feel his talent is untapped. He has this image of a strong masculine icon, but there is a strong emotional core to him as well, which is not seen enough. Salman is very honest in his approach to work. He keeps it simple. He knows that 99 per cent of his audience understands basic emotions, so he won't unnecessarily complicate stuff. He also deserves credit for bringing families back to the theatres when single-screen cinemas were struggling. This is reflected in the number of blockbusters to his name, from *Hum Aapke Hain Koun...!* (1994) to *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* (2015). He has become a flag-bearer of clean entertainment which reflects the value system of India. When he delivers on that, there is no stopping him at the box office. ■

Ali Abbas Zafar *directed Salman Khan in* Sultan *and* Tiger Zinda Hai

WORLD-CLASS

A.R. RAHMAN, 54

India's truest global star has given a soundtrack to our lives

BY IMTIAZ ALI

I was in college when I heard Rahman for the first time. A friend and I lay down in the YMCA hostel and heard two of his albums back-to-back—*Roja* and *Thiruda Thiruda*. I didn't understand Tamil. I was only in it for the music. I was fascinated by him. In my experience, people who you're a fan of often start to seem ordinary after you have met and worked with them. It's only Rahman who remains a star. He bedazzles you by being extremely honest and accessible. He will never say anything untrue.

My films, of course, don't exist when I am telling Rahman their story, but when he comes up with a tune or interlude, I am always amazed by how well he has given sound to all that I was telling him. He never comes across as an intellectual in conversation, but when he creates music, I am always struck by how deeply he has understood the context I tried to explain.

He was once the craze of the season, and he then became the flavour of the decade. For a while, he was the Hollywood-returned music director. Even though Rahman has done it all, he is still, fantastically, making music he has never made before. Every song he makes is new, and, yet, you only need to hear one strain of his music to know it is him. ■

Imtiaz Ali *has directed hits like* Rockstar *and* Tamasha

TCD/PROD.DB / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

Epic Visionary

S.S. RAJAMOULI, 47

Rajamouli's unique gift is knowing how to transform epic visions into reality on the screen

BY RANA DAGGUBATI

Rajamouli's true spirit is his ability to take a very high concept and give it a mainstream narrative to which everybody in the country can connect. He can make an extremely successful commercial film about a housefly in *Eega* or the *Bahubali* franchise through which he unites India, proving you can make films that can break the boundaries of language and region. With the two *Bahubali* films, he told an Indian story on the biggest possible scale with emotions and visuals to match. He used visual effects, sound and the latest technology to make the film go beyond the ordinary and become an 'experience'.

What he has done to cinematic minds and creative thinkers in India is empower them to think big and fearlessly. I have met a lot of creative people, and there are many who want to tell 'grand stories', but Rajamouli is the only one who has been meticulous enough to achieve it. He gives people the confidence to be their best and he brings them together to achieve the singular vision in his mind. ■

Rana Daggubati *is an actor, producer and entrepreneur*

EXCELLENCE IN DEED

AAMIR KHAN, 56

The actor's complete commitment to projects and his appetite for taking risks make him unique

BY RAJKUMAR HIRANI

NISHIKANT GAMRE

It's any director's dream to work with Aamir, a big reason being that he only takes up one film at a time and is totally invested in it.

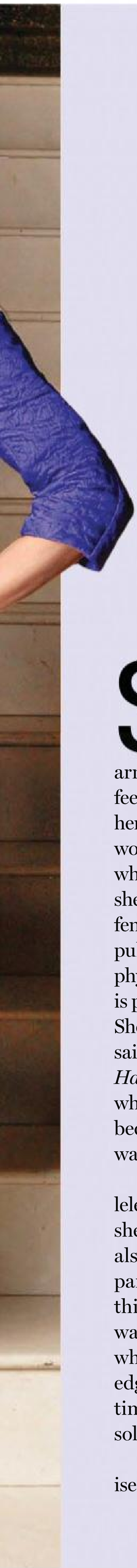
Aamir always goes with his gut feeling when he selects a film. If he has to choose between 'what will work' and what his gut is saying, he will go with his gut, his voice from within. Look at *Lagaan*, it's a three-hour, 40 minute period drama where the last 75 minutes is a cricket match. Nobody in their senses would think it'd work! Conventional wisdom will say he's taking a risk, but in his head it's not one. He's just looking out for something new or unseen. The result is that he has chosen interesting subjects like *Dangal*, *Secret Superstar* and *Taare Zameen Par*.

Contrary to popular perception, he's very easy to work with. In *PK*, we decided that when the alien [played by Khan] lands on Earth, he'd be naked and so we would shoot with his backside bare. While narrating the scene, I thought he'd raise an objection. He didn't. On the day of the shoot, I thought he would have issues but he didn't blink an eyelid and shot for it. Later, in post-production we covered it with smoke. It's his complete commitment to cinema which makes him an extremely unique actor. ■

Rajkumar Hirani *is the director and co-writer of Hindi cinema's biggest hits, namely* Munna Bhai MBBS, 3 Idiots *and* PK

Sridevi is the only Indian female actor who could pull off comedy, especially physical comedy...

MANDAR DEODHAR



75TH
INDEPENDENCE
DAY SPECIAL

A CLASS OF HER OWN

SRIDEVI (1963-2018)

At her peak, Sridevi was India's biggest pan-Indian star, with movies being sold just on her name

BY VIDYA BALAN

Sridevi is timeless. Every time you saw those eyes, they were arresting, there was pure feeling in them. It made her the ultimate close-up woman, breathing life into whatever she did. I think she is the only Indian female actor who could pull off comedy, especially physical comedy. *Mr India* is proof of it. Director Shekhar Kapur famously said that during '*Hawa Hawaii*' he didn't know where to place the camera because every inch of her was performing.

Her range is unparalleled; there was nothing she couldn't do. She is also probably our biggest pan-Indian star. I don't think she even knew she was the hero of the film or whether people acknowledged that. There was a time when films were sold solely on her name.

She didn't intellectualise her work talking about method or process. She just touched you like no one else did. I say this with utmost respect that she was shameless. She didn't judge herself and that's the greatest gift an actor can possess. She could have been part of bad films but pick up any of them and I can vouch for it that she isn't bad in them. She redefined the Hindi film heroine, telling us that she could be good, bad, ugly, everything. Her passion for her work never waned, and even if it did, it never showed.

I told [filmmaker] Gauri Shinde that I wanted to assist her during *English Vinglish* just so I could watch Sridevi unleash her magic. I was offered the remake of *Sadma* years ago. I wouldn't touch it with a bargepole. What's sacred is sacred. ■

***Vidya Balan** is a National Award-winning actress*

Shah of Many Shades

SHAH RUKH KHAN, 55

The Badshah of Bollywood has captivated audiences with his eclectic filmography

BY ASHUTOSH GOWARIKER

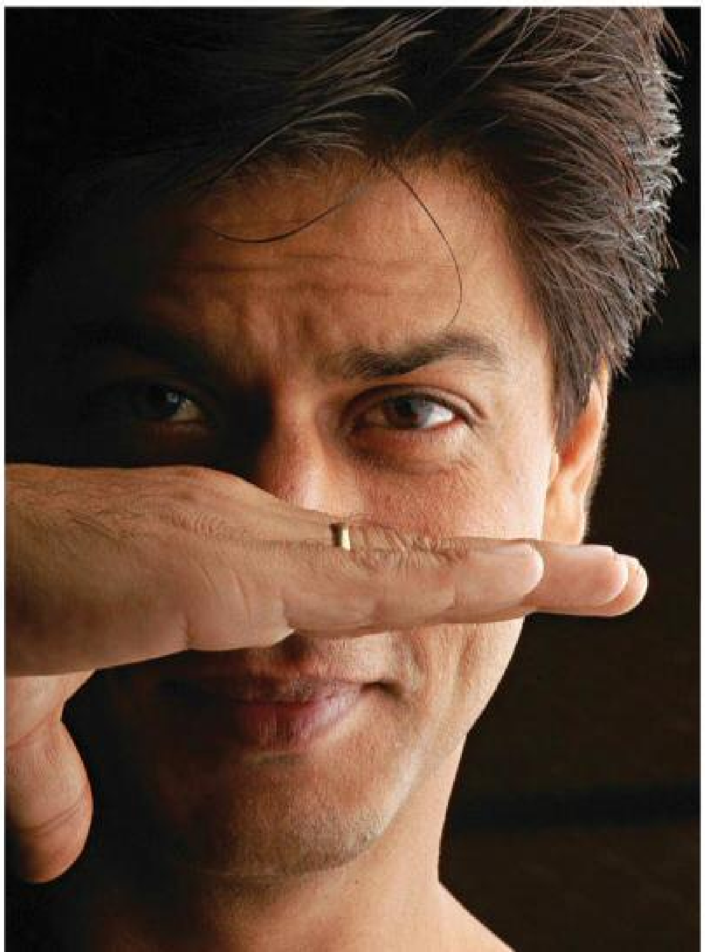
I have known Shah Rukh since the days he was Shahrukh, not SHAH RUKH KHAN.

In my journey from being a co-actor to director, I have seen Shah grow, evolve and mesmerise people around him in multiple ways.

As a co-actor, I was intrigued by his own spin to the 'method' of acting. He has this ability to learn and rehearse his lines at record speed. After he learns his lines, all his focus is on using his eyes, lips, hands, his entire body to give meaning to the dialogues he is delivering. It is fascinating to watch and it's what makes him magnetic!

As a director, what I love about him is his no-nonsense attitude, combined with inventiveness. For *Swades*, he brought out an untapped part of his persona and funneled it into the character of Mohan Bhargava. That was special. If you look at Shah's eclectic cinematic journey, he has got so many shades to him. And I know there are elusive parts of his personality that filmmakers are yet to tap into. When that happens, Shah Rukh would have lit...yet another light bulb! ■

***Ashutosh Gowariker** is writer-director of Oscar-nominated film* Lagaan



BANDEEP SINGH

KING B

AMITABH BACHCHAN, 78

Age hasn't slowed down this colossus of the Indian film world, who even now has three projects lined up for release

BY R. BALKI

You could call Amitabh Bachchan a great actor or a great star but I don't think anything does as much justice to him as his name—Amitabh Bachchan. He's the only performer in the film industry who has lent a bit of himself to the characters he has played, be it a drunkard, a coolie, a child, a romantic or an angry man. So, in every film he ends up playing a double role: one of Amitabh Bachchan, the other of the character. The only other person who has done so is Marlon Brando. Most dons wanted to be like Brando's *Godfather*.

In most acting schools, you are taught to lose yourself to the part. But Bachchan has become Bachchan by not losing himself. You could call it wisdom or intelligence, but he has never stopped doing it. He has understood that it is what has brought many characters alive and a whole generation to behave and speak like him. There have been great actors and there will be greater actors, but the difference between Bachchan and the rest is this phenomenal ability to not lose himself every time. That's why Amitabh Bachchan is bigger than most of the roles created for him.

As a fan, I get very disturbed when I can't see 'him' in the role. I want the character to have a lot of Bachchan. I think in terms of impact, no other actor has affected the minds, hearts and lives of so many people beyond cinema as he has. ■

R. Balki *is the writer-director of* Cheeni Kum, Paa *and* Pad Man

BANDEEP SINGH

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